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When Natsuki and Chizuru arrive at Chika's house for a study session, they end up putting aside schoolwork to help out with some chores. After cleaning the large bathroom, they take advantage of the big tub and soak in a refreshing bath. But before they get dressed, Kaoru arrives on the scene—and sees them all naked. Studying was never this fun!

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AI YORI AOSHI™
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AI YORI AOSHI

文月晃

By Kou Fumizuki

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI™

VOLUME 12

STORY & ART
BY
KOU FUMIZUKI

TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

Ai Yori Aoshi Vol. 12
Created by Kou Fumizuki

Translation - Alethea Nibley & Athena Nibley
English Adaptation - Jamie S. Rich
Copy Editor - Hope Donovan
Retouch and Lettering - Fawn Lau
Production Artist - Mike Graniel
Cover Design - Gary Shum

Editor - Rob Valois
Digital Imaging Manager - Chris Buford
Production Manager - Jennifer Miller
Managing Editor - Lindsey Johnston
VP of Production - Ron Klamert
Publisher and E.I.C. - Mike Kiley
President and C.O.O. - John Parker
C.E.O. and Chief Creative Officer - Stuart Levy

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TOKYOPOP Inc
5900 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 2000
Los Angeles, CA 90036

E-mail: info@TOKYOPOP.com
Come visit us online at www.TOKYOPOP.com

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Takeo Minazuki
A third-year student in the photography club. She's clumsy and awkward, but she tries her hardest at everything she does.
Tina Foster
A fourth-year student at Meiritsu University. She, like Kaoru, is in the photography club. An American who was raised in Hakata.
Mayu Miyuki
The daughter of the head of Miyuki Fabrics, she entered Meiritsu University at the age of sixteen through a special consideration for students who have lived abroad. She met Kaoru when she was little, and even now, she is in love with him.
Chika Minazuki
Taeko's cousin, a student in her first year of high school. An energetic girl who always has a tan. She's staying in the boarding house next to the Sakuraba manor.
Natsuki Komiya
Chika's classmate and a fellow member of the swimming club. She's always bright and energetic. She's under the misguided assumption that Kaoru is Chika's boyfriend.
Chizuru Aizawa
Chika's classmate. She was invited by Chika to join the swimming club, even though she can't swim. She has a gentle, quiet personality.
Uzume (Ferret)
It was being raised by Tina, but now for some reason, it has gotten attached to Miyabi.

Kaoru Hanabishi was torn away from his mother when he was very young and raised as the heir of the Hanabishi Zaibatsu; however, he found he was unable to endure the harsh responsibilities placed on him, and he ran away from home to live by himself. He continued life in this fashion right up until the arrival of Aoi Sakuraba, who had been his betrothed and who loved him for eighteen years. Kaoru was blown away by her devotion, but her request for him to go back to the Hanabishi was the one thing he could not do. Aoi recognized the pain this caused Kaoru, so she decided to leave her own family, the Sakuraba, instead. Rather than lose her daughter, Aoi's mother conceded to allow the two of them to live together.

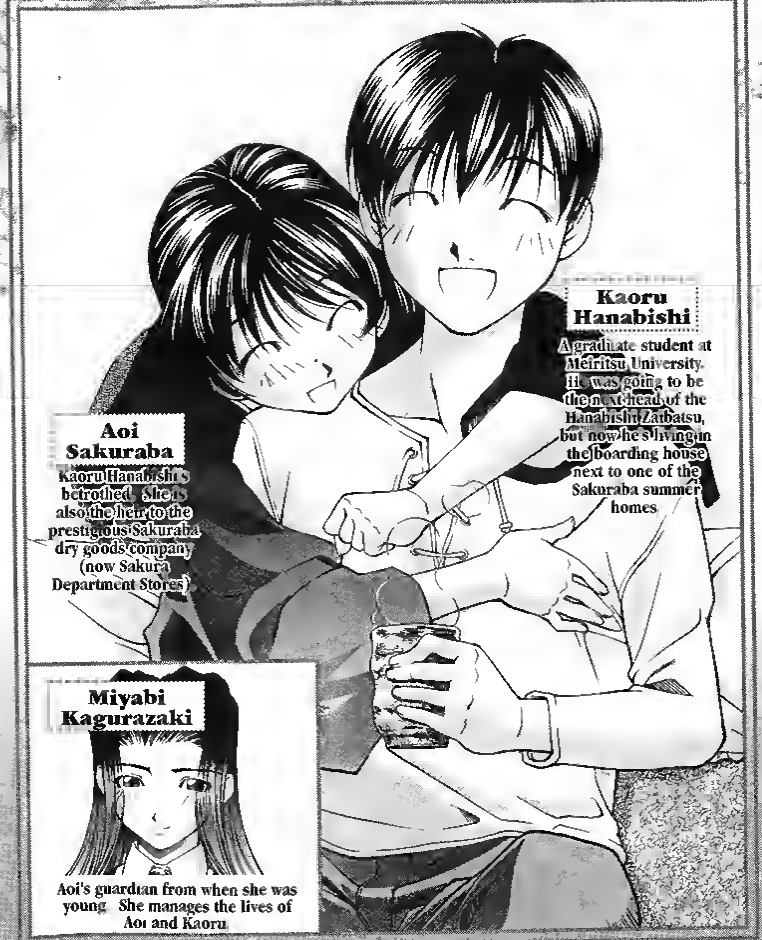
The couple moved to a western-style house that had previously been one of the Sakuraba's summer homes, and they now share the estate with Aoi's guardian, Miyabi Kagurazaki. There is a catch, though--while Aoi and Miyabi live in the main house, Kaoru has to live in the boarding house adjacent to it.

Shortly after, Tina Foster and Taeko Minazuki, members of Kaoru's photography club, moved into the boarding house, as well. In order to avoid creating a scandal for the Sakuraba family, Aoi must keep up the pretense that she is Kaoru's landlady, and not his fiancée.

Some time has passed since the charade began. Mayu Miyuki has returned from England, and Taeko's cousin, Chika Minazuki, has joined the group of friends. Ironically, the more women that gather around Kaoru, his and Aoi's feelings for each other grow deeper and deeper.

藍より青し

Summary of the story so far...


Kaoru Hanabishi
A graduate student at Meiritsu University. He was going to be the next head of the Hanabishi Zaibatsu, but now he's living in the boarding house next to one of the Sakuraba summer homes.
Aoi Sakuraba
Kaoru Hanabishi's betrothed. She is also the heir to the prestigious Sakuraba dry goods company (now Sakura Department Stores).
Miyabi Kagurazaki
Aoi's guardian from when she was young. She manages the lives of Aoi and Kaoru.

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI

CHAPTER 94 KAMABISUSHI BOISTEROUSNESS

AI YORI AOSHI

藍より青し 12

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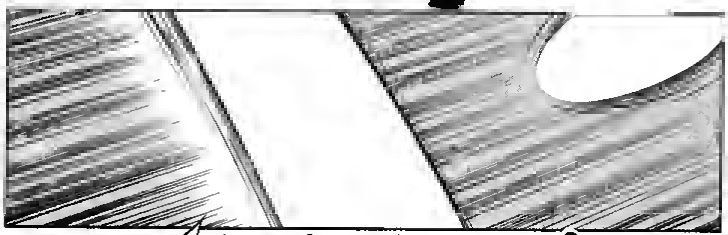
HYAA!!

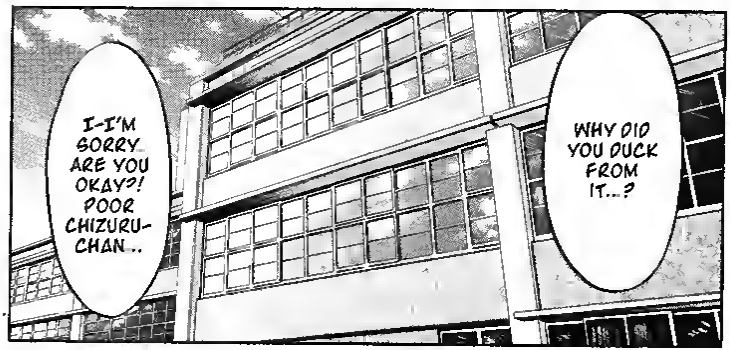


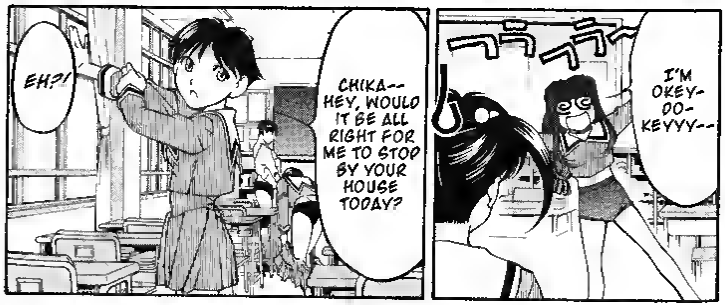
OH, NO!!
IT'S GOING TOWARDS
YAH!!

HEH HEH HEH
THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO DUEL.

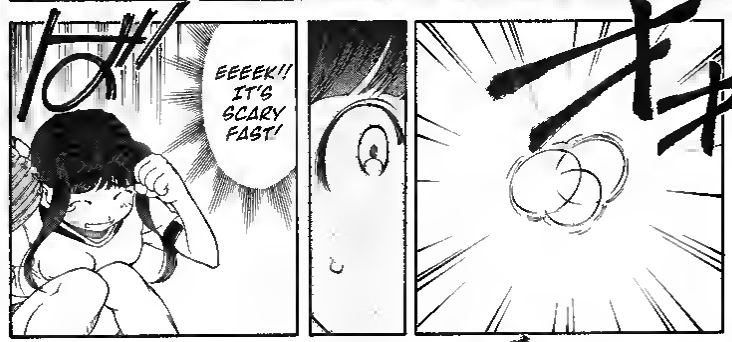
I WOULON'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY, NATSUKI-CHAN!!
I WON'T GO EASY ON YOU, CHIKA.

CHIZURU!!
CHI-ZURU-CHAN!
nghhh


I-I'M SORRY... ARE YOU OKAY?! POOR CHIZURU-CHAN...
WHY DID YOU DUCK FROM IT...?


EH?!
CHIKA--- HEY, WOULD IT BE ALL RIGHT FOR ME TO STOP BY YOUR HOUSE TODAY?
フラフラ
I'M OKEY-DOO-KEYYY---

CHIZURU! CHAN!!
UH-OH.. IT'S COMING MY WAY..
I HAVE TO CATCH IT, I HAVE TO CATCH IT...
オロオロ


EEEEK!! IT'S SCARY FAST!
キョ

スコーン

WELL, SEEING AS HOW MY MIDTERMS HAD MORE RED INK THAN BLACK ON THEM...
...IT'D BE REALLY GREAT IF YOU LET ME SEE YOUR NOTES OR SOMETHING, YOU KNOW?
MMM, WELL, I DON'T MIND, BUT...
THEN IT'S DECIDED! STUDY PARTY AT CHIKA'S HOUSE!!
YOU'RE COMING TOO, RIGHT, CHIZURU?
REALLY? MAY I?
HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE I'VE BEEN INVITED TO A FRIEND'S HOUSE?
?!

ぱく
ぱくぱく
UM, WELL, CHIKA'S ROOM IS...
Huh?

SHE'S GOOD AT SPORTS, SHE'S SMART, AND ON TOP OF THAT, SHE'S A SPOILED RICH GIRL...?
OHHH... I WONDER IF IT'S REALLY OKAY FOR SOMEONE AS UNWORTHY AS ME TO INTRUDE
N-NO, NOT THAT ONE!
CHIKA'S HOUSE IS THIS WAY.
ちょこん
We are bestest friends, after all!
CHIKA! IF YOU EVER HAVE ANY PROBLEMS, LAY THEM ON ME, GIRL!!

Older sister?
I'M HOME! AOI-ONEE-CHAN!
WELCOME HOME, CHIKA-SAN
OH, YOU MUST BE CHIKA-SAN'S SCHOOL FRIENDS? GOOD AFTER-NOON
YES, THEY'RE FORMING A STUDY GROUP WITH CHIKA
IS IT SOME SPECIAL OCCASION?
HELLO...

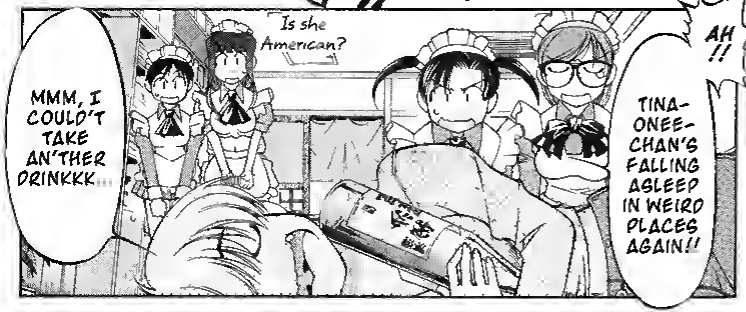
ARE YOU GOING TO CLEAN THE BATH NOW, TAE-NEECHAN?!
YUP I NEED TO GET A MOVE ON, TOO
WELCOME HOME, CHIKA-CHAN.
AH, TAE-NEECHAN. THERE YOU ARE--
AFTER THIS, I HAVE TO CLEAN THE FLOORS, WEED THE YARD...
...MAKE MIYABI-SAN'S COFFEE, DO THE LAUNDRY...
SO, CHIKA AND FRIENDS WILL HELP, TOO!!
AND FRIENDS?!
TAE-NEECHAN LOOKS LIKE SHE'S HAVING A TOUGH DAY...
...SO?

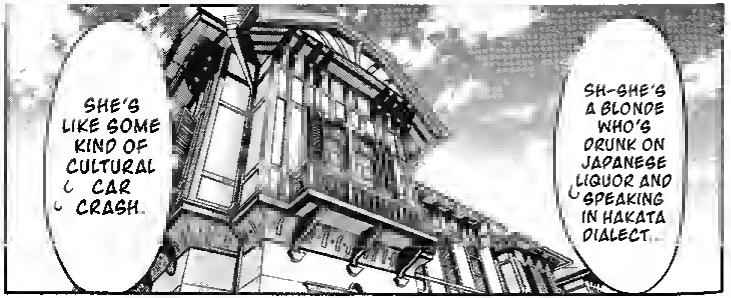
THAT'S GREAT! AOI-ONEECHAN'S COOKING IS SOOOO AMAZING! YOU HAVE NO IDEA!!
Ooh
EH!? DO YOU MEAN IT, AOI-NEECHAN?
YES, OF COURSE
IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT I BOUGHT A LOT OF FOOD TODAY. WOULD YOU TWO CARE TO JOIN US FOR DINNER?
THAT SOUNDS NICE
WELL, THEN I'D BETTER GET TO WORK ON TONIGHT'S MEAL
N-NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT...
Aoi-oneechan isn't my oneechan...
YOU TWO DON'T LOOK MUCH ALIKE AT ALL.
Just like a maid!
YOU HAVE SUCH A PRETTY SISTER

WHY DO WE HAVE TO WEAR THESE?

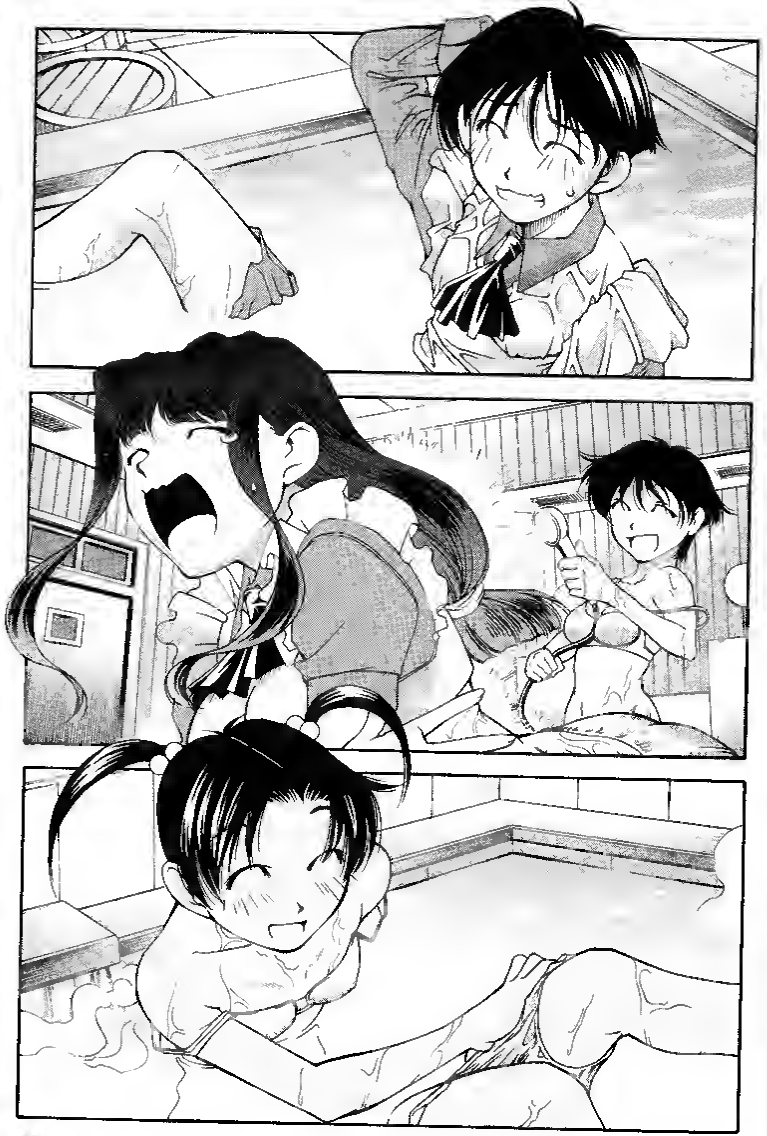
Um, I came here to study
THOSE WHO DON'T WORK DON'T EAT.

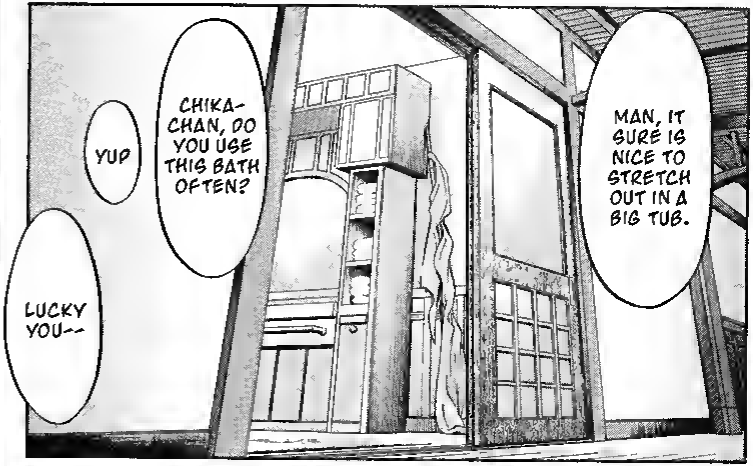
WHO IS THIS WASTE OF SPACE?!
SNAAAAA!!
ACHOO!!

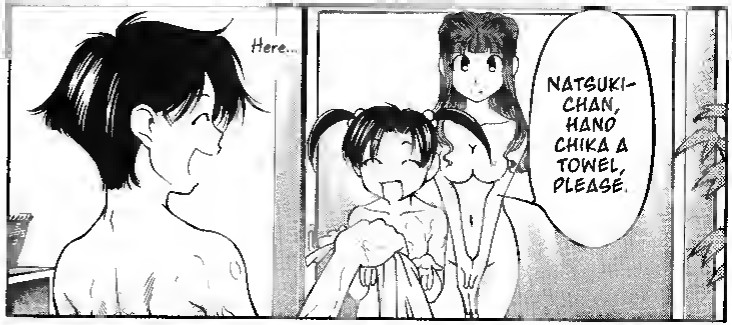

Is she American?
MMM, I COULD'T TAKE AN'THER DRINKKK...
AH!!
TINA-ONEE-CHAN'S FALLING ASLEEP IN WEIRD PLACES AGAIN!!

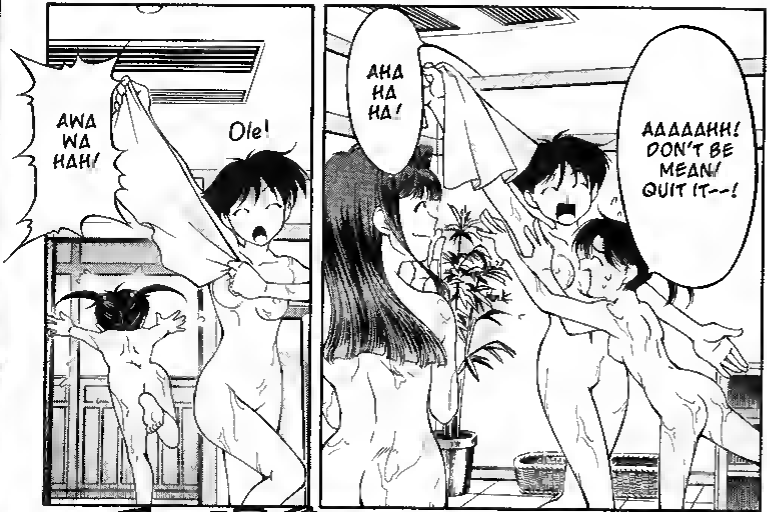

SHE'S LIKE SOME KIND OF CULTURAL CAR CRASH.
SH-SHE'S A BLONDE WHO'S DRUNK ON JAPANESE LIQUOR AND SPEAKING IN HAKATA DIALECT...

EVEN YOUR BATH-ROOM IS HUGE...
YOWZA!
I'LL TAKE TINA-SENPAI TO HER ROOM.
OKAY LEAVE THE REST TO US
squish
squish
squish
Ah soft Toe-chin
HEY!
HEY!
WOULD IT BE OKAY TO TAKE A BATH AFTER WE CLEAN?!
SURE, WHY NOT?
ALL RIGHT!! THEN LET'S DO IT.



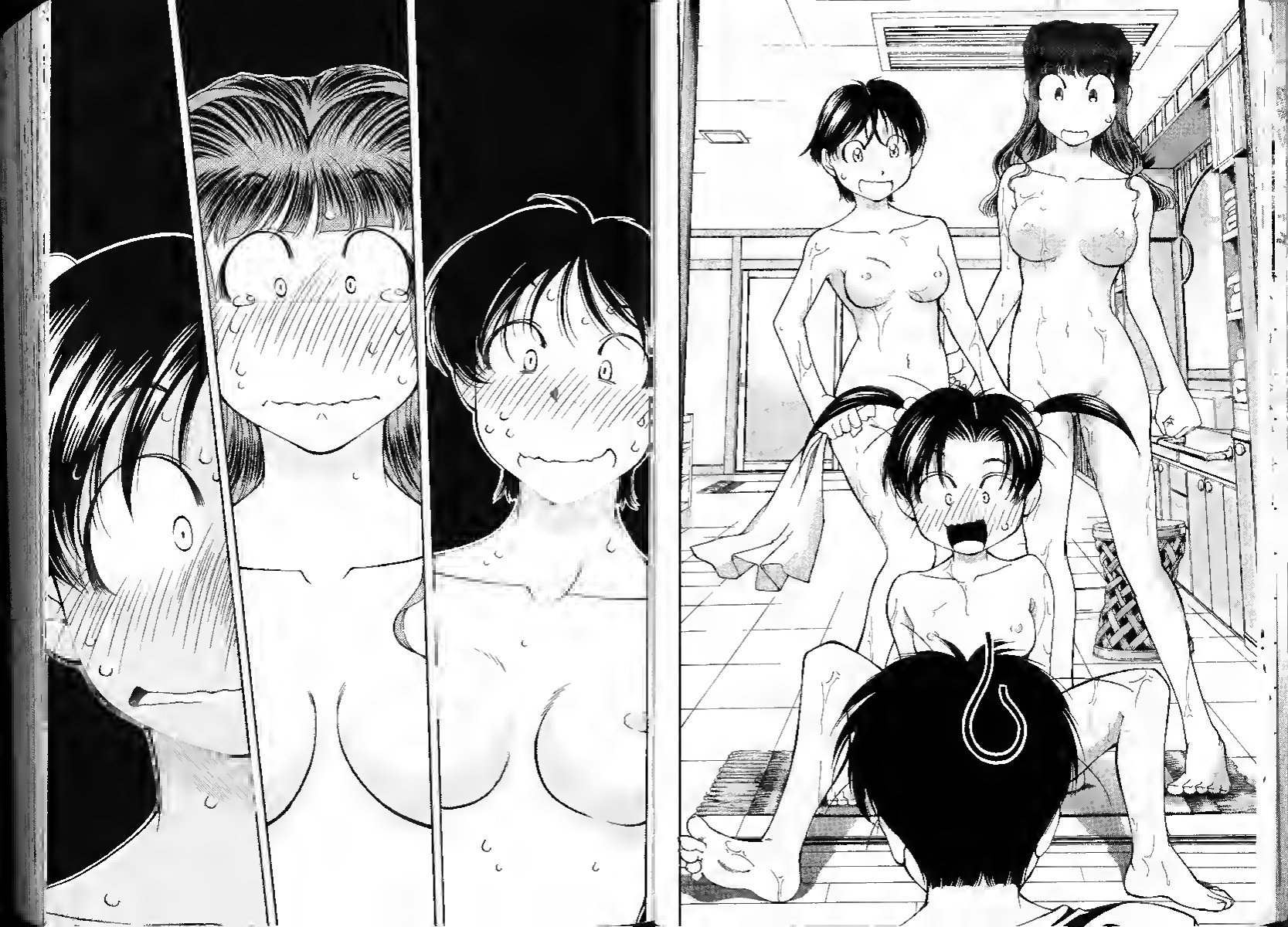

MAN, IT SURE IS NICE TO STRETCH OUT IN A BIG TUB.
CHIKA-CHAN, DO YOU USE THIS BATH OFTEN?
YUP
LUCKY YOU--


Here...
NATSUKI-CHAN, HAND CHIKA A TOWEL, PLEASE.


AWA WA HAH!
Ole!
AHA HA HA!
AAAAAHH! DON'T BE MEAN! QUIT IT--!

ドカーン
EEEE!!
WUZ-ZAT?!

OWW...



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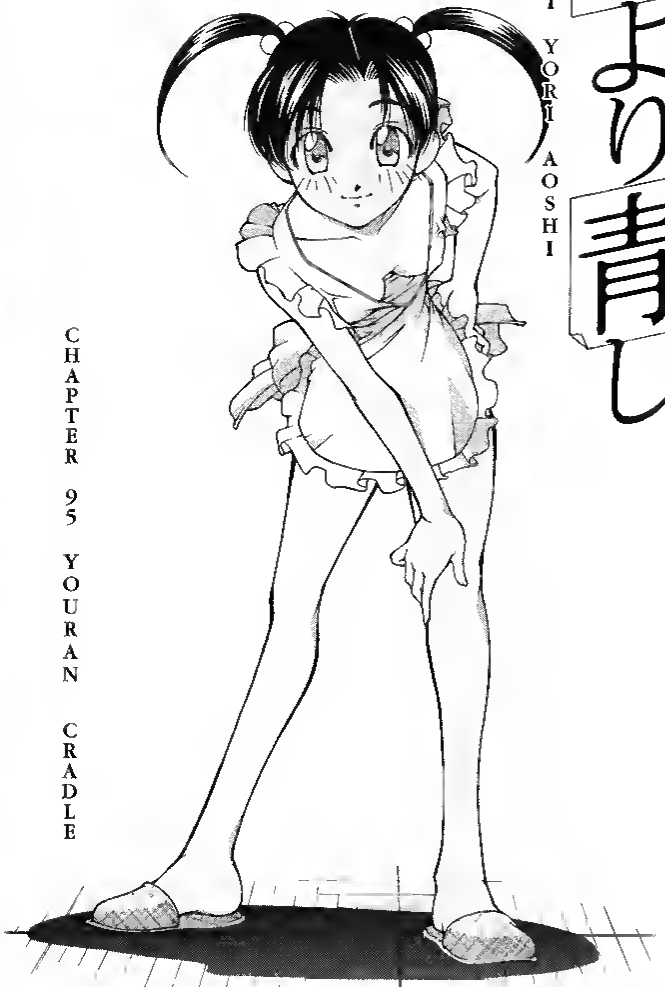
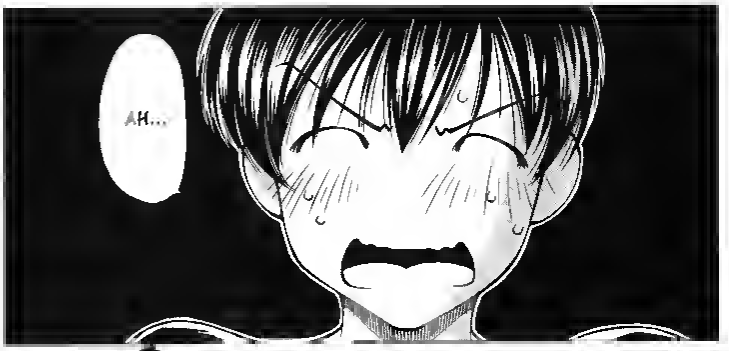
AI YORI AOSHI

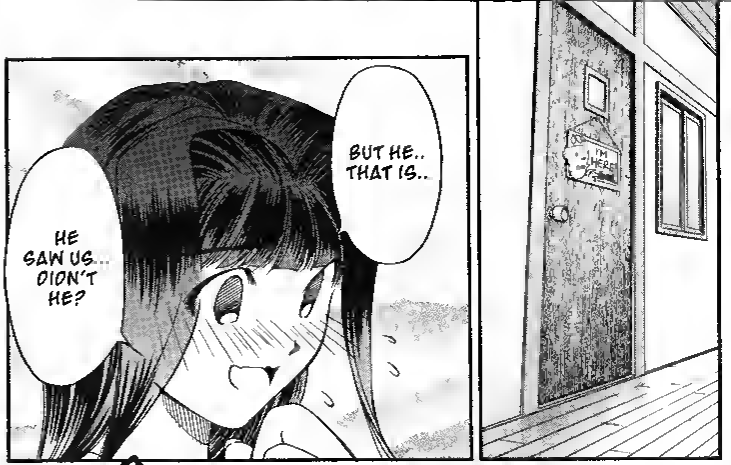


CHAPTER 95 YOURAN CRADLE



EEEEEHHH?!!
A-ACTUALLY, WE LIVE TOGETHER
YOU MEAN..."LIVING IN SIN"?
LIVE...?
...YOU FORCED YOURSELF ON HIM?!!
THAT MEANS...
ONII-CHAN LIVED HERE FIRST.
I-IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. I MEAN...
Aaaugh!
WHAT'S GOING ON?! CHIKA!!
"WHAT"? WELL--
WHAT'S HE DOING HANGING AROUND HERE?!
THAT'S THE GUY IN YOUR NOTEBOOK! HE'S YOUR BOYFRIEND, RIGHT?

HE SAW MORE OF YOU THAN OF US, CHIKA..


BUT HE.. THAT IS..
HE SAW US... DIDN'T HE?
I'M HERE

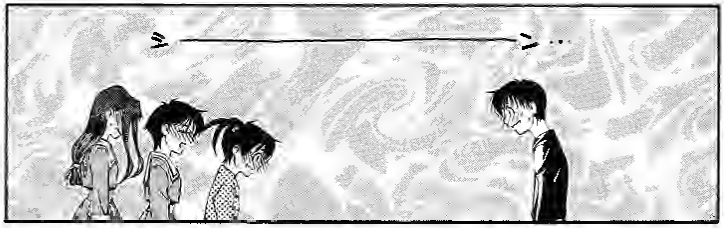
ガチャ

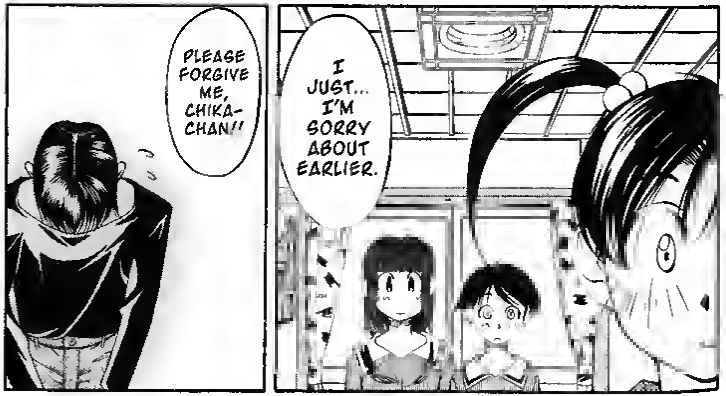
I-I'M SORRY IT HAPPENED BECAUSE CHIKA IS SO CLUMSY
Uhh
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, CHIKA!!
IT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED IF I HADN'T BEEN GOOFING OFF
BESIDES

IF IT HAD BEEN ME, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GO ON LIVING...
IF IT HAD BEEN ME, IT WOULD'VE TAKEN ME AT LEAST SIX MONTHS TO RECOVER...

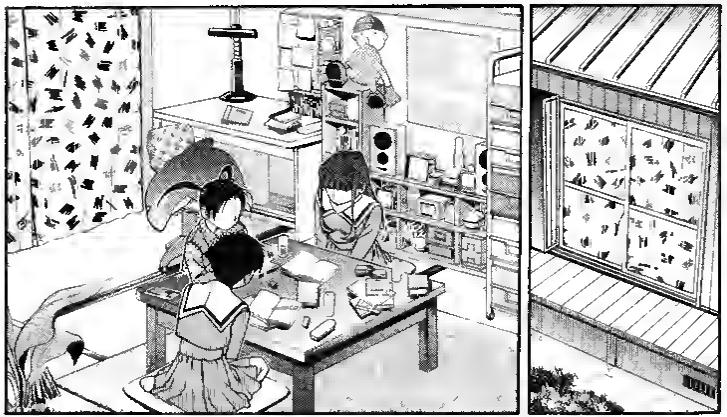
?!

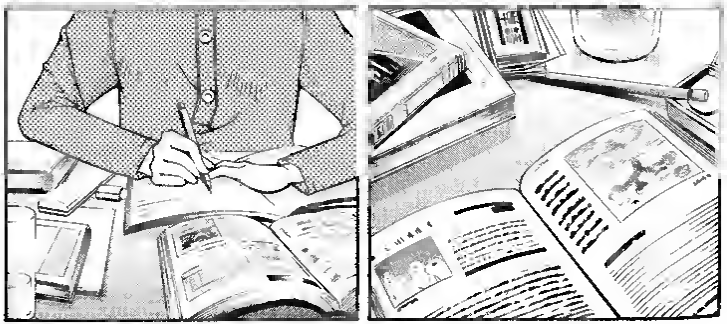
ONII-CHAN!!
UM, CHIKA-CHAN, CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A MINUTE?




PLEASE FORGIVE ME, CHIKA-CHAN!!
I JUST... I'M SORRY ABOUT EARLIER.

HEE



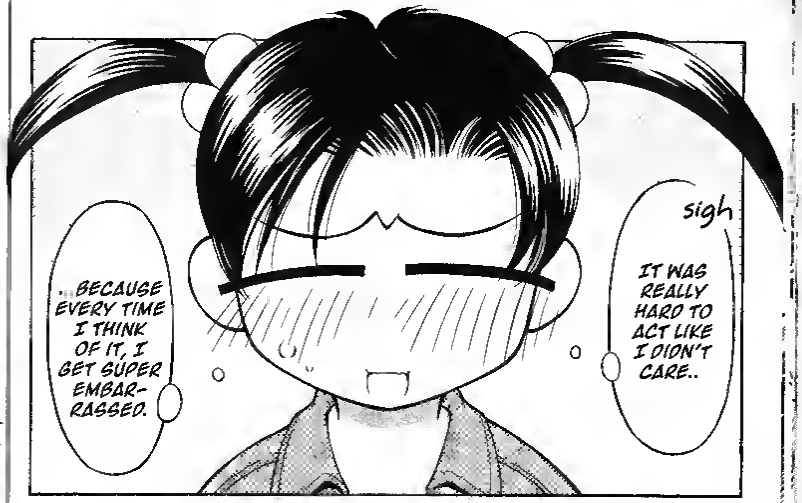


CHIKA'S NOT BOTHERED BY IT.

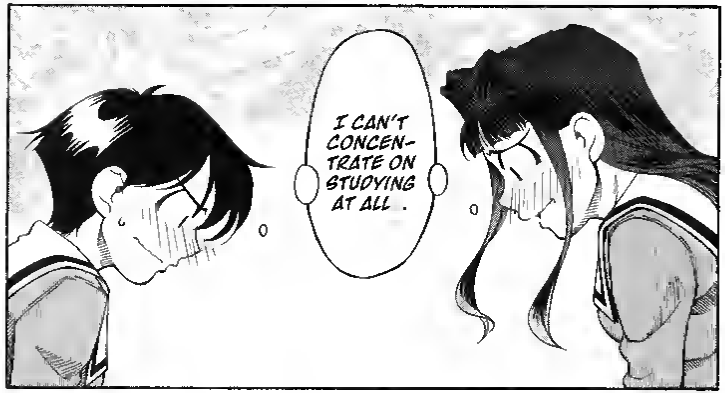
RIGHT, NATSUKI-CHAN? CHIZURU-CHAN?

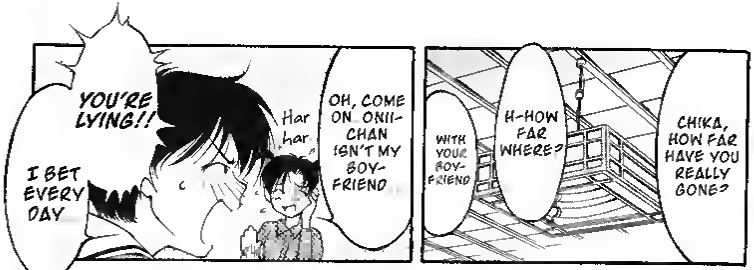
IT WAS BECAUSE CHIKA WAS PLAYING AROUND TOO MUCH
I-IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, ONII-CHAN

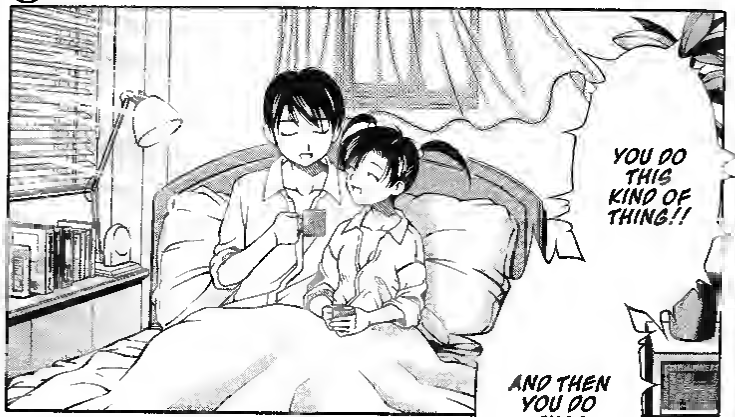
`CAUSE, YOU KNOW, IT'S NOT LIKE IT WAS THE FIRST TIME.

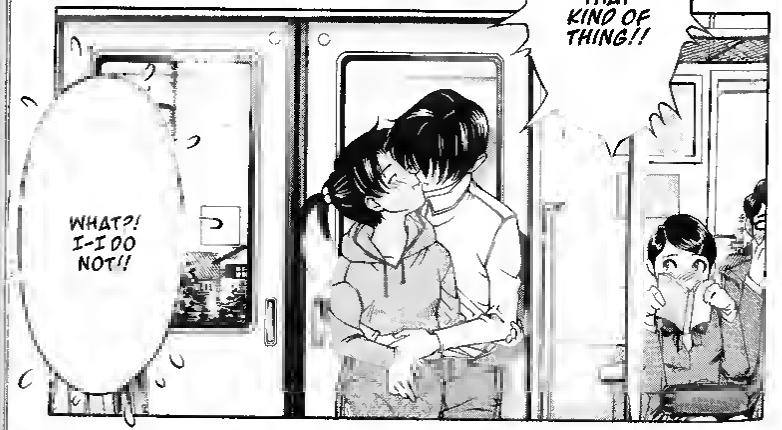

sigh
IT WAS REALLY HARD TO ACT LIKE I DIDN'T CARE..
.. BECAUSE EVERY TIME I THINK OF IT, I GET SUPER EMBARRASSED.

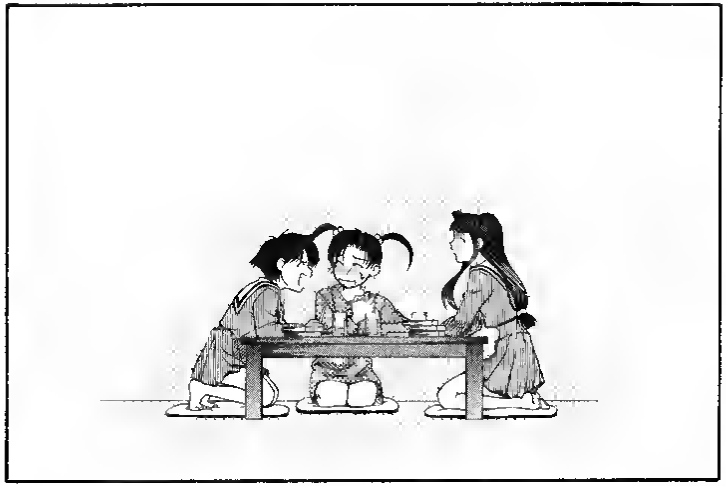
I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW I'D SURVIVE IF ANYONE BUT ONII-CHAN MARRIED CHIKA


I CAN'T CONCENTRATE ON STUDYING AT ALL .

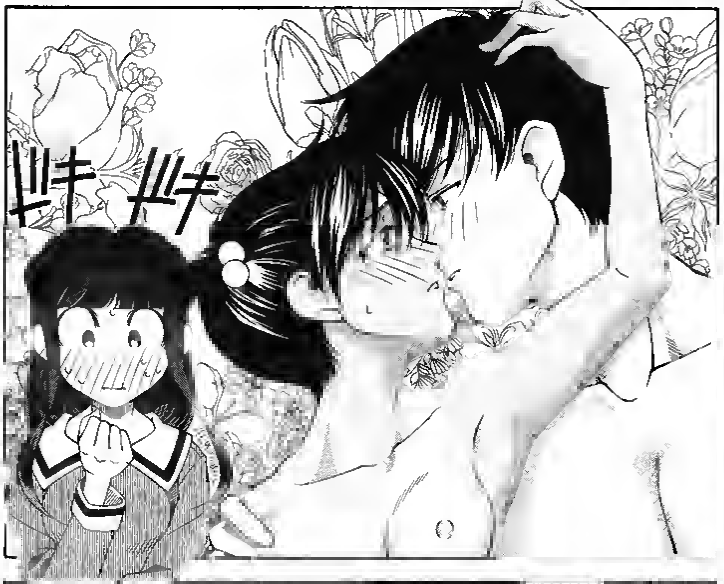

CHIKA, HOW FAR HAVE YOU REALLY GONE?
H-HOW FAR WHERE?
WITH YOUR BOYFRIEND
OH, COME ON ONII-CHAN ISN'T MY BOYFRIEND
Har har.
YOU'RE LYING!!
I BET EVERY DAY


YOU DO THIS KIND OF THING!!


AND THEN YOU DO THAT KIND OF THING!!
WHAT?! I-I DO NOT!!



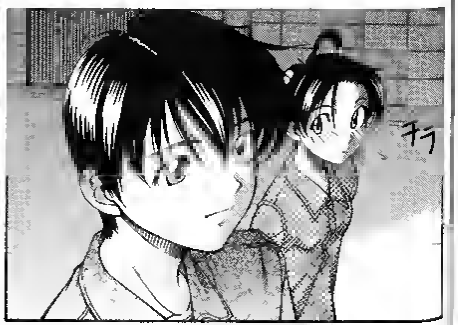
C'mon, you can tell me!


ビキ ビキ

ビビ
ビビ
CHIZURU-CHAN, YOU WEREN'T HAVING WEIRD FANTASIES JUST NOW, WERE YOU?

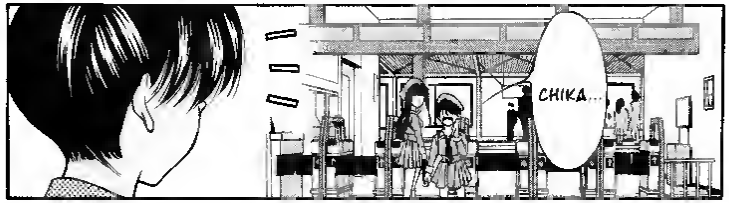
LET'S GO HOME, CHIKA-CHAN
OKAY

YOU'RE SO LUCKY, CHIKA ...



SEE YOU LATER, NATSUKI-CHAN! CHIZURU-CHAN!

YES, THANK YOU FOR DINNER.
THANKS FOR EVERY-THING.


CHIKA...

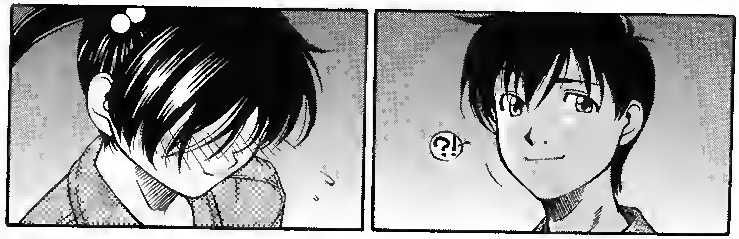
(?!)
UMMMM... WITH WHAT--?

GOOD LUCK--!!

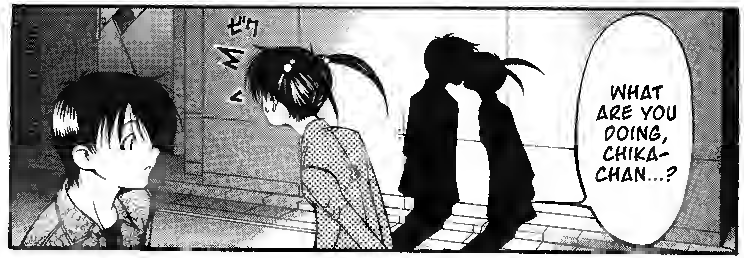
WHAT, CHIKA-CHAN?
ONII-CHAN?
BOY-FRIEND HUH?
I WONDER IF CHIKA AND ONII-CHAN LOOK LIKE GIRL-FRIEND AND BOYFRIEND
WILL YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES, JUST FOR A SECOND?
SURE.
Like this?
OH...ONII-CHAN.

NOT TO MENTION REALLY NICE, TOO.
HE'S TOTALLY TOGETHER AND WAY MATURE
EH?!
I WANT ONE JUST LIKE HIM.
I WISH I COULD MEET SOMEONE LIKE THAT.
YOU THINK?
TEE HEE HEE...
I'M MASSIVELY JEALOUS.

I-I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING!!
UHHHHH..

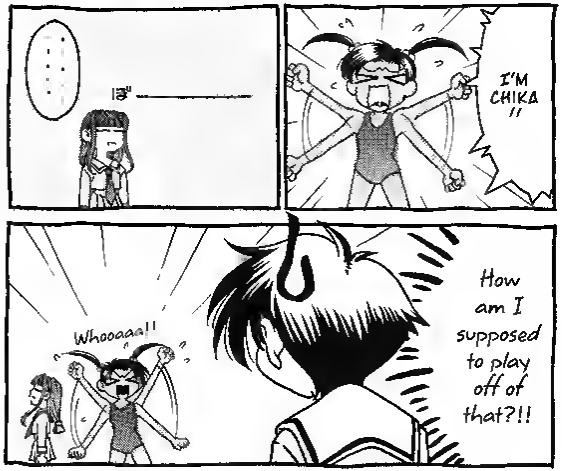

?!

OOF!!
YEAAAH!!


WHAT ARE YOU DOING, CHIKA-CHAN...?

Ai-Ao Theatre

Part 26: Chika-rins



End of Chapter 95: Youran — Cradle

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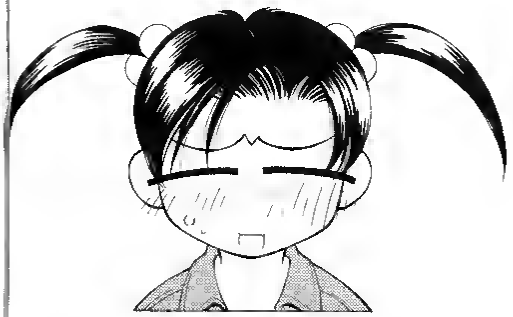
AI YORI AOSHI
CHAPTER 96 SHOUAI DEEP LOVE

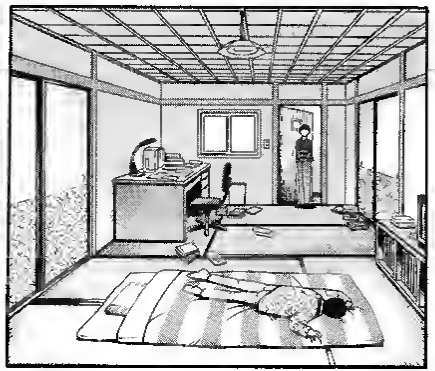
藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI



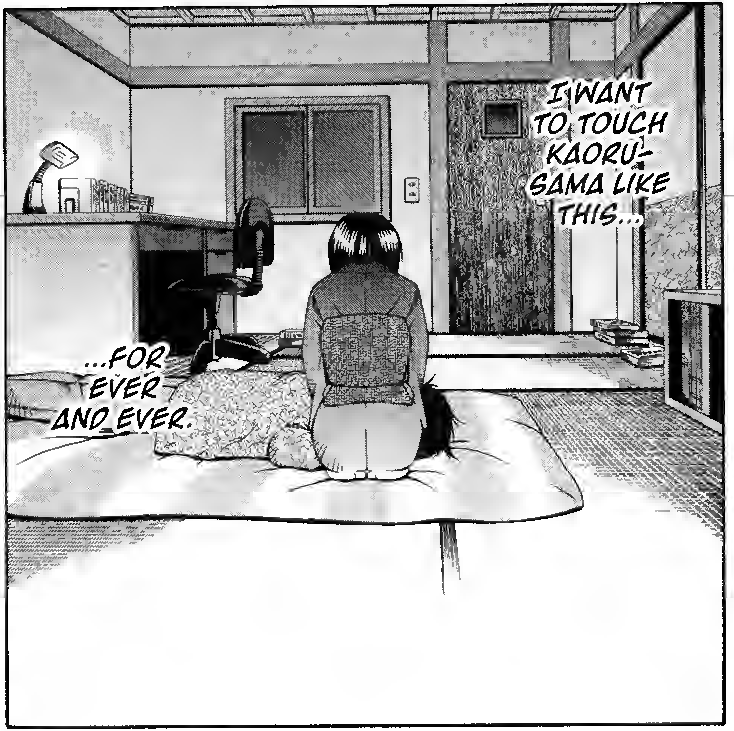
KAORU-SAMA...?

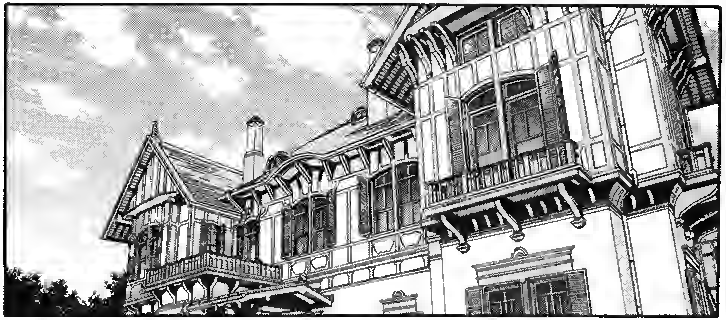
ㅈㅏ...
ㅈㅏ..

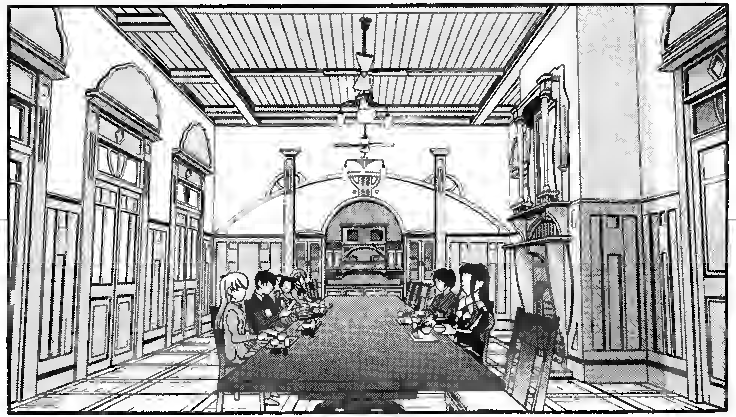


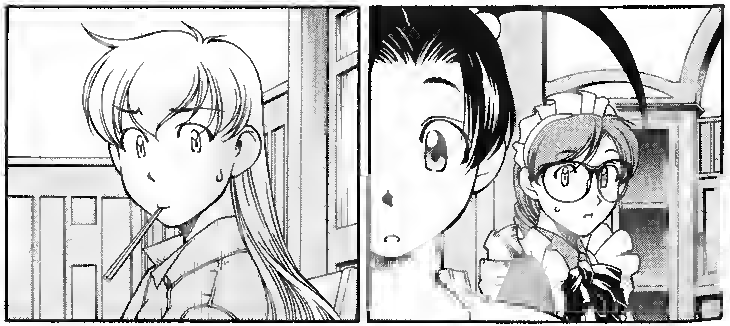
YOU'RE KILLING YOURSELF STAYING UP LATE TO STUDY, AREN'T YOU, KAORU-SAMA?
UH... NN...

...SO WARM.


I WANT TO TOUCH KAORU-SAMA LIKE THIS...
...FOR EVER AND EVER.

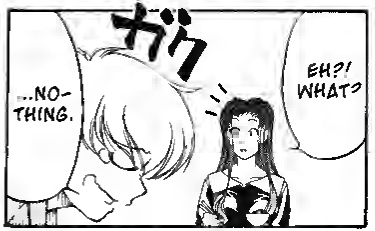


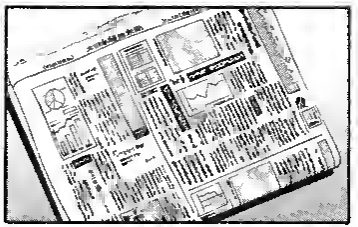




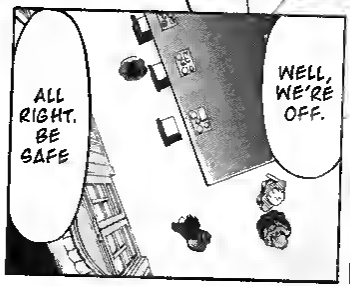
TELL HIM I'M RIGHT, MANAGER-SAN!!

EITHER EAT OR STUDY! BUT PICK ONE!!
YOU HAVE THE WORST MANNERS, KAORU!

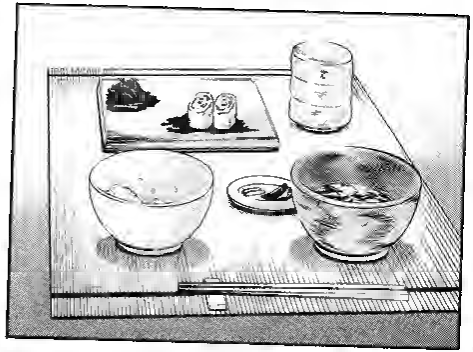

ガク
...NOTHING.
EH?! WHAT?

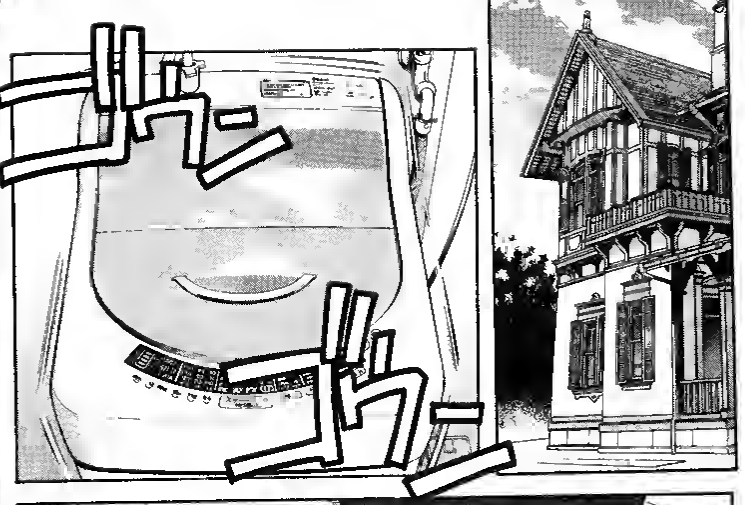


HAVE A GOOD DAY, CHIKA-CHAN
I HAVE TO HURRY, OR I'LL BE LATE--!!
SEE YOU LATER!


ALL RIGHT. BE SAFE
WELL, WE'RE OFF.

YEAH
I GUESS WE SHOULD GET GOING, TOO.

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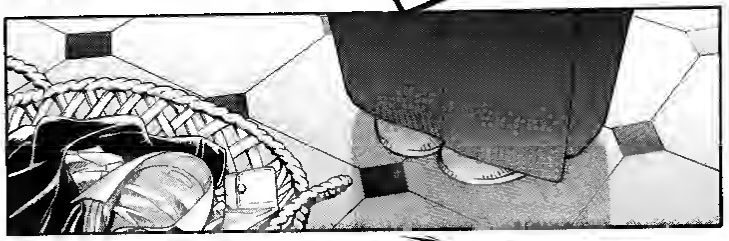
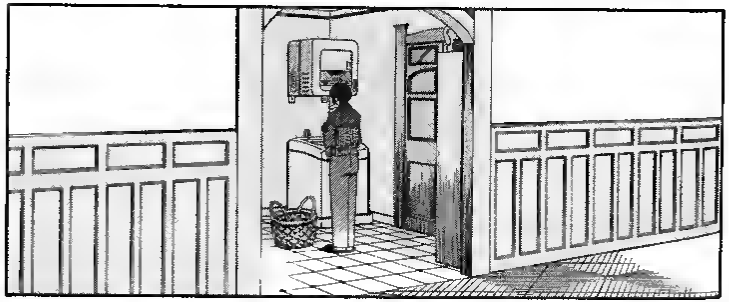
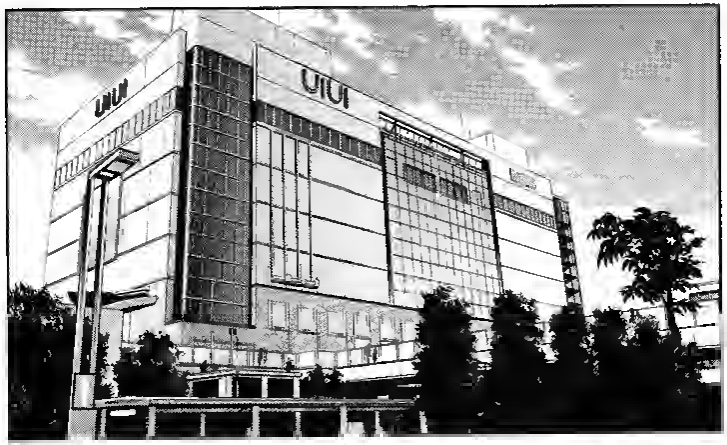


I NEVER DREAMED THAT...

...BEING BY KAORU-SAMA'S SIDE LIKE THIS COULD STILL MEAN...
...I'D BE AS LONELY AS I WAS WITHOUT HIM.

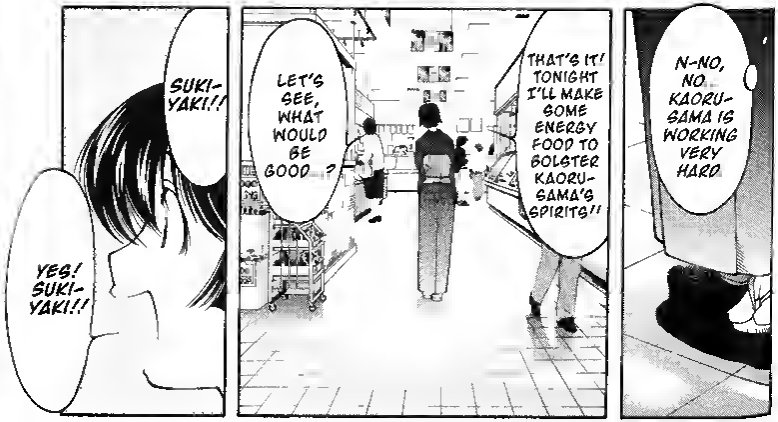



UNIQLO

WHAT SHOULD WE HAVE TONIGHT?

N-NO, PARDON ME
AH, I'M SORRY
bump

Yes, sorry?
Hah, hah, Gaya


SUKI-YAKI!!
YES! SUKI-YAKI!!
LET'S SEE, WHAT WOULD BE GOOD...?
THAT'S IT! TONIGHT I'LL MAKE SOME ENERGY FOOD TO BOLSTER KAORU-SAMA'S SPIRITS!!
N-NO, NO. KAORU-SAMA IS WORKING VERY HARD

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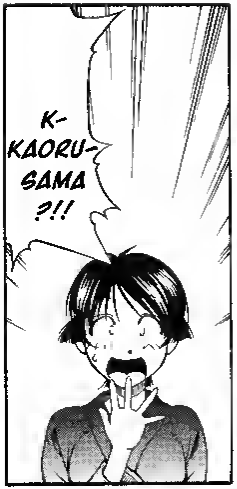
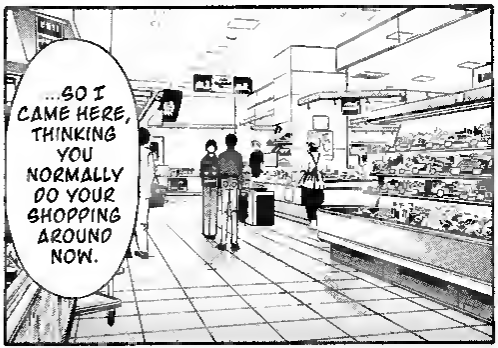

K-KAORU-SAMA ?!!

...EH?!

I'M SO HAPPY I FOUND YOU. CLASSES ENDED EARLIER THAN I THOUGHT...

AWWWW!~


...SO I CAME HERE, THINKING YOU NORMALLY DO YOUR SHOPPING AROUND NOW.

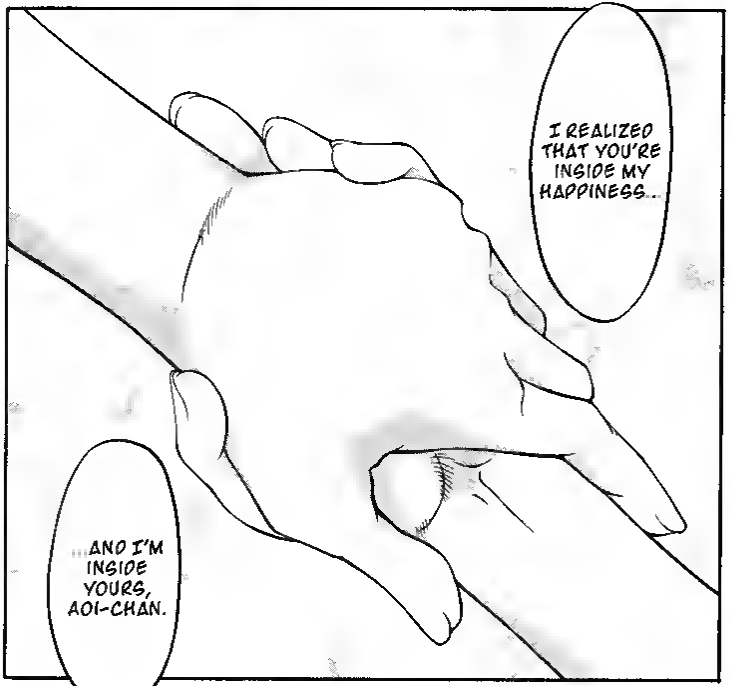
I'M SORRY, AOI-CHAN.
I'VE BEEN SO BUSY LATELY, WE'VE BARELY SEEN EACH OTHER.
IT'S MAKING YOU FEEL ABANDONED, ISN'T IT?
N-NO, I'M ALL RIGHT.
I UNDER-STAND.
OH, NO! IT MUST BE THAT WHENEVER I THINK ABOUT KAORU-SAMA...
...HE SEES IT ALL OVER MY FACE.
I'VE BEEN MULLING OVER A LOT OF THINGS SINCE I GOT BACK FROM THE HANABISHI.

WONDERING WHAT WE NEED FOR YOU TO BE HAPPY, AOI-CHAN...

HUH?!

ONE NEEDING THE OTHER, WE ENVELOP EACH OTHER...
...AND WE CAN ONLY FIND TRUE BLISS TOGETHER.

AOI-CHAN'S HAPPINESS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE HANABISHI, OR WITH THE SAKURABA.
AOI-CHAN'S HAPPINESS IS INSIDE ME.
I UNDER-STAND THAT NOW.


I REALIZED THAT YOU'RE INSIDE MY HAPPINESS..
...AND I'M INSIDE YOURS, AOI-CHAN.

IT'S LIKE YOU'VE GOTTEN STRONGER.
OR MORE ASSURED OF YOURSELF.

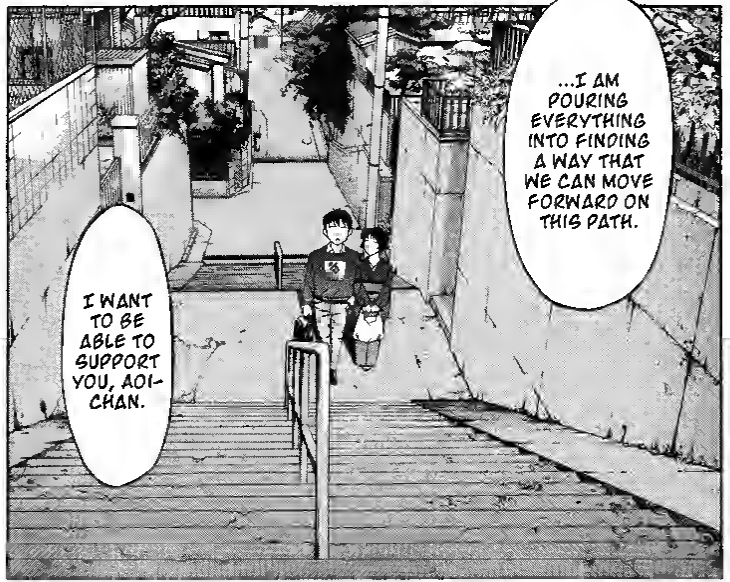
NO DOUBT.
YOU DO REALIZE, THOUGH, THAT THE BETTER YOU GET AT PROVIDING, THE MORE SPOILED I'M GOING TO BECOME!

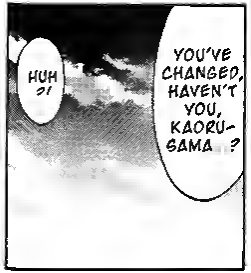
R-REALLY?
YES.

AOI-CHAN...

...WHAT BRINGS AOI HAPPINESS AT THIS MOMENT?
I WONDER IF YOU KNOW...

RIGHT NOW.


...I AM POURING EVERYTHING INTO FINDING A WAY THAT WE CAN MOVE FORWARD ON THIS PATH.
I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SUPPORT YOU, AOI-CHAN.


HUH?!
YOU'VE CHANGED, HAVEN'T YOU, KAORU-SAMA?

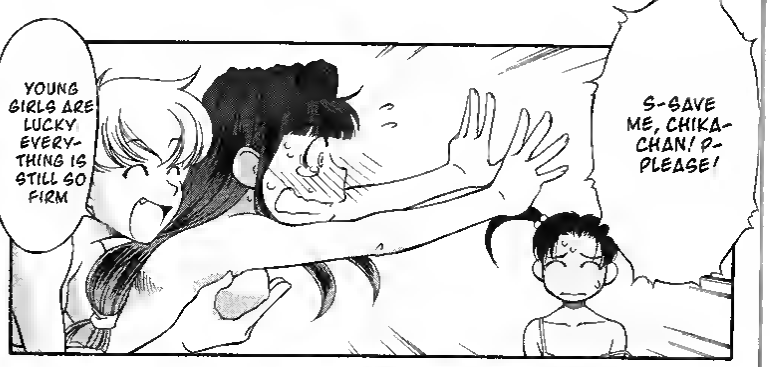
End of Chapter 96: Shouai — Deep Love

HERE I AM, HERE I AM!!
SORRY FOR THE WAIT, NATSUKI-CHAN, CHIZURU-CHAN!
CHIZURU-CHAN, YOU CAN'T SWIM?!
No
WHAT? DUDE, WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?!!
WHA--?!
ARE YOU GOING OUT SOME-WHERE, CHIKA-RIN?
YUP THE SWIM CLUB IS HAVING PRACTICE IN A HEATED POOL
WE HAVE TO HELP CHIZURU GET UP TO SWIMMING 25 METERS BEFORE THE YEAR IS OVER

ガチャ
COMING!
UH, UM, IS CHIKA-CHAN HOME?
HELLO, TINA-SAN!!

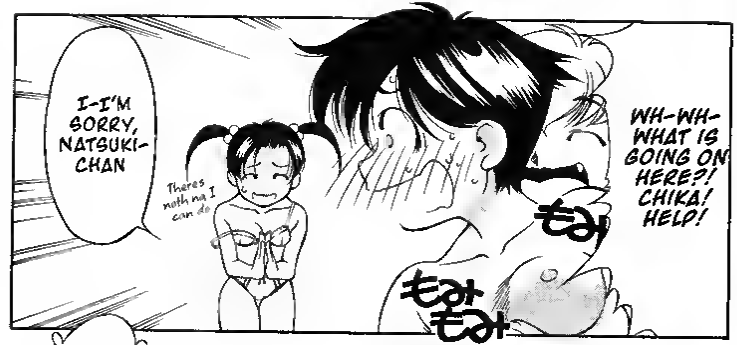
ビーズ!!
OKAY, FIRST THING YOU NEED IS AN athletic HIGH-SCHOOLGIRL BODY.
CHEEEECK!!
GYAHHH ?!!

ナビはは
WHEN IT COMES TO WATER SPORTS, YOU DON'T GET ANY BETTER THAN ME!
SHE'S SO SURE OF HERSELF. DO YOU THINK SHE USED TO BE IN A SWIMMING CLUB, TOO?
HMM, SHE NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT IT...
SO WHAT? SHE CAN'T BE AS GOOD AS YOU, CHIKA


YOUNG GIRLS ARE LUCKY EVERY-THING IS STILL SO FIRM
S-SAVE ME, CHIKA-CHAN! P-PLEASE!

YES, MA'AM
YOUR TURN, CHIKA-RIN!

It's hopeless.
I'M SORRY, CHIZURU-CHAN!!


I-I'M SORRY, NATSUKI-CHAN
There's nothing I can do
WH-WH-WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?! CHIKA! HELP!

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?!
YIIIIII!!

YOU KNOW, IT'S WEIRD, I'VE NEVER SEEN TINA SWIM WITHOUT DORKING AROUND.
IS THE WATER REALLY SAFE WITH HER IN IT?
LET'S START WITH SOME LIGHT SWIMMING TO WARM UP

SORRY, GUYS. LET'S GIVE IT ANOTHER TRY.
TALK ABOUT A "SINKING FEELING"!
OW OW OW! MY LEG'S CRAMPED!!

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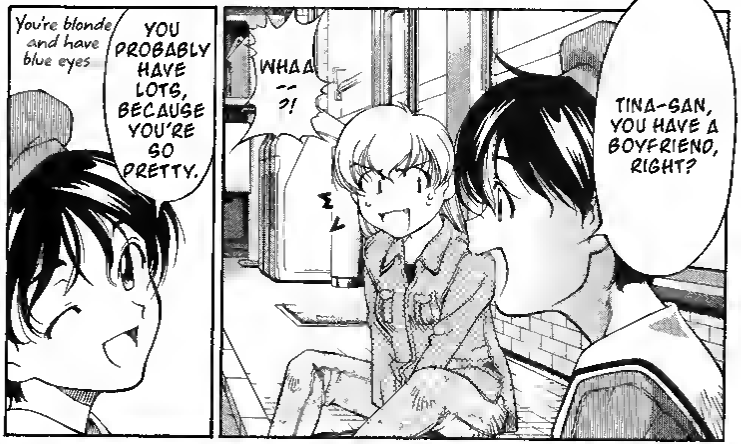
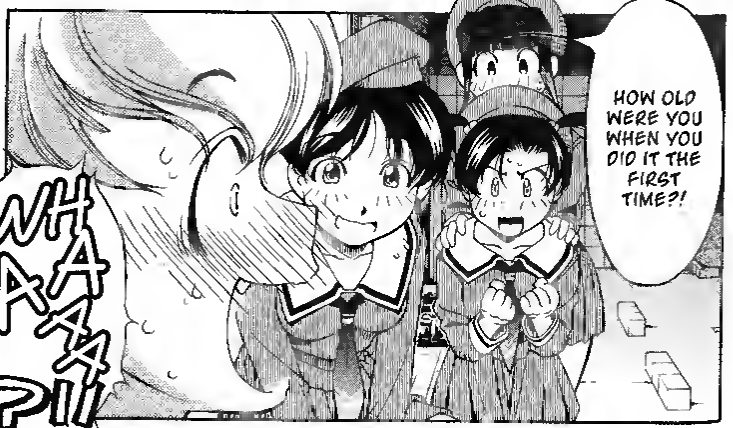
PLEASE!!
TEACH CHIZURU TO DO THAT
THAT WAS AMAZING! I DION'T KNOW YOU COULD SWIM THAT FAST.
SPLUHHH ?!
HEH-HEH...
HEH...
ALL RIGHT! I'LL GIVE YOU THREE THE "TINA TREAT-MENT"!!
THANKS, COACH!!

EEEEEEE?!!
EH?!
TINA-ONEE-CHAN!!
A-AMA-ZING...
IS IT JUST ME, OR WAS THAT INSANELY FAST?!


You're blonde and have blue eyes
YOU PROBABLY HAVE LOTS, BECAUSE YOU'RE SO PRETTY.
WHAA--?!
TINA-SAN, YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND, RIGHT?

N-NO... I MEAN... THAT IS--


HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU DID IT THE FIRST TIME?!
WHAAA?!!

I can't mov...
SIGH... I'M EXHAUSTED..

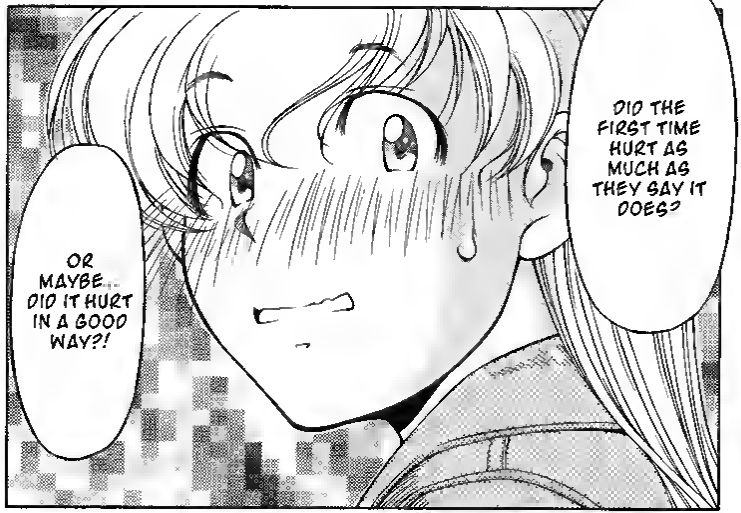
CHIKA LEARNED SO MUCH FROM JUST ONE LESSON.
YOU WERE SO AWESOME! EVEN CHIZURU-CHAN WAS INSPIRED TO SWIM.

HUH?! TEACH YOU WHAT?
I'D LIKE YOU TO KEEP TEACHING ME, TINA-SAN--

I wish I could have worn one.
WELL, THEY ARE CUTE
REAL-LY?
YOU KNOW, THE UNI-FORMS AND STUFF
I LIKE JAPANESE SCHOOLS

AND I'D HAVE LIKED BEING WITH ALL THE OTHER STUDENTS...

IF--


DID THE FIRST TIME HURT AS MUCH AS THEY SAY IT DOES?
OR MAYBE... DID IT HURT IN A GOOD WAY?!

Nooo!
WHAT'S WRONG? JUST GIVE US THE GENERAL IDEA.
I-I CAN'T TELL YOU THOSE THINGS!

SEVEN
YOU'RE ASSUMING A LOT!
I BET YOU'VE GONE A LOT FARTHER THAN WE HAVE--!

IF I HAD GONE TO HIGH SCHOOL IN JAPAN, I WONDER IF IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE THIS?
BIG BITE
I WONDER IF I WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HAVE THIS MUCH FUN...?

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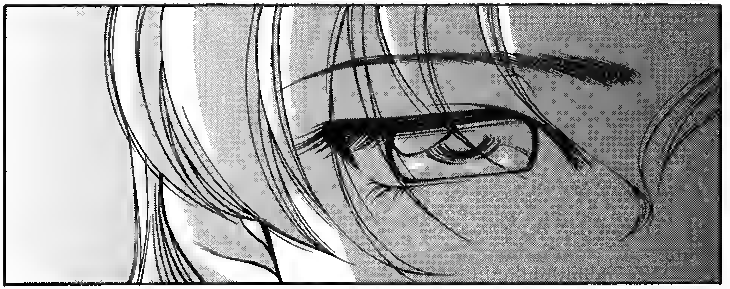
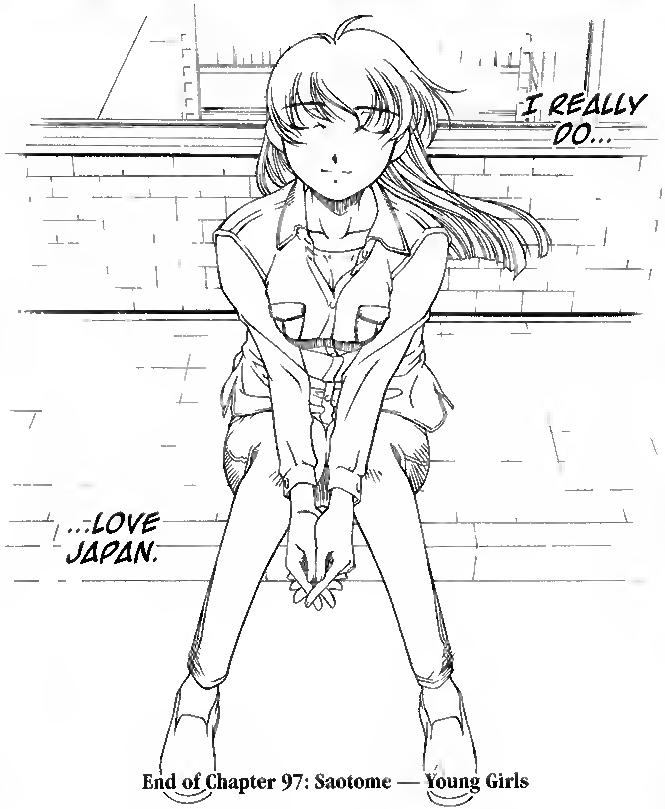
AI YORI AOSHI

CHAPTER 98 TOMOGARA COMRADES





End of Chapter 97: Saotome — Young Girls

TAKE THAT!!
NOOO!! LUNGS... FILLING... WITH WATER--!!
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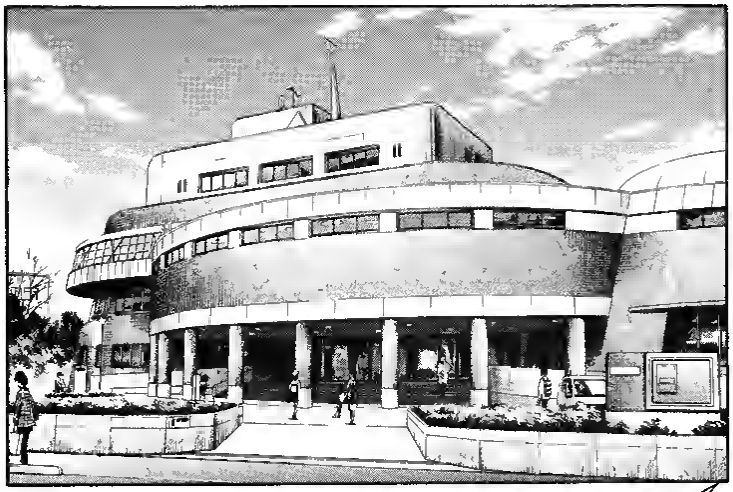
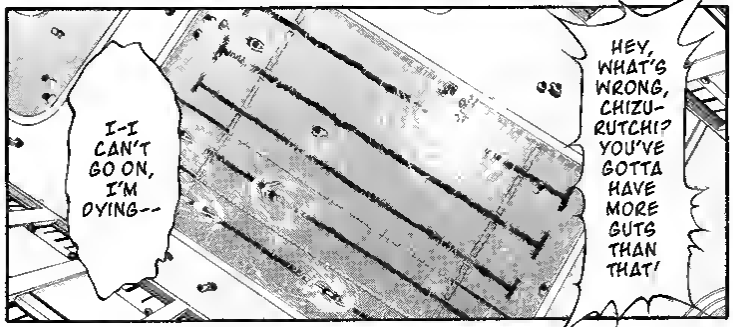
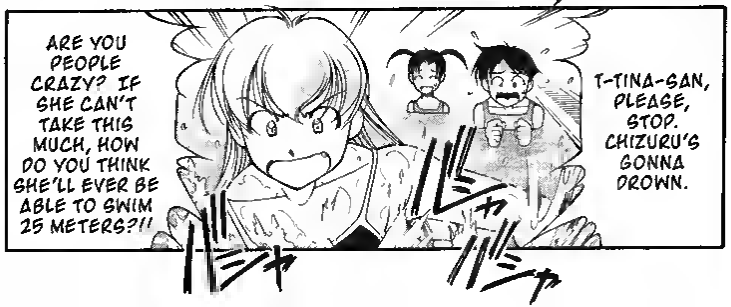
コチョ
コチョ
WA HA HA HA HA!!
YEEAHHHH! THAT'S THE SPIRIT!!




I-I CAN'T GO ON, I'M DYING--
HEY, WHAT'S WRONG, CHIZU-RUTCHI? YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE MORE GUTS THAN THAT!

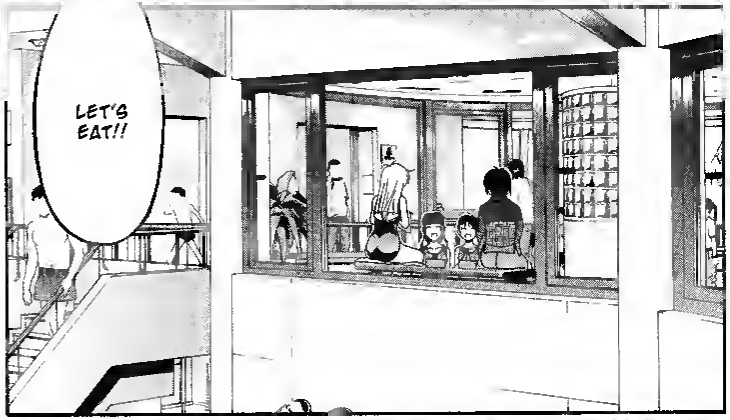

ARE YOU PEOPLE CRAZY? IF SHE CAN'T TAKE THIS MUCH, HOW DO YOU THINK SHE'LL EVER BE ABLE TO SWIM 25 METERS?!!
T-TINA-SAN, PLEASE, STOP. CHIZURU'S GONNA DROWN.
ハシャ
ハシャ

I-I'M GONNA CROAK... I'LL LAUGH TO DEATH
七七七七
A-ARE YOU OKAY, CHIZURU...?
七七七七
I THINK OUR "TRAINER" IS SECRETLY THE DEVIL
HOW MANY TIMES DID SHE MAKE ME LAUGH SO MUCH I ALMOST DROWNED...?
C'MON, C'MON, WHEN YOU DO THE BREAST-STROKE, YOU HAVE TO BEND YOUR LEGS MORE!!
OOOOOHHH, I'M CATCHING UP--I'M GONNA GET YOU, LITTLE GIRL! MUWAHAHA!
NOOOO!!
ばっしゃ
ばっしゃ
HUH?!
HA! GOT-CHA!!
NYAAH!!

まおまほ
NO! PLEASE! NOT ANOTHER PENALTY!!
こちょ
こちょ
こちょ
こちょ
こちょ
SHE'S SWIMMING CIRCLES AROUND CHIKA.
Like a demented merma d
Uhh, my stomach hurts
セク
セク

GOOD AFTERNOON, NATSUKI-SAN, CHIZURU-SAN.
A-AOI-SAN!
LAND-LADY-SAN!! YOU CAME!
YES I WANTED TO CHEER YOU ALL ON.
セク
セク
パカ

WHOAA HO HO! THE FOOD LOOKS DELICIOUS!!


LET'S EAT!!

I'M GLAD
THANK YOU, LANDLADY-SAN. RIGHT WHEN I WAS GETTING HUNGRY...!

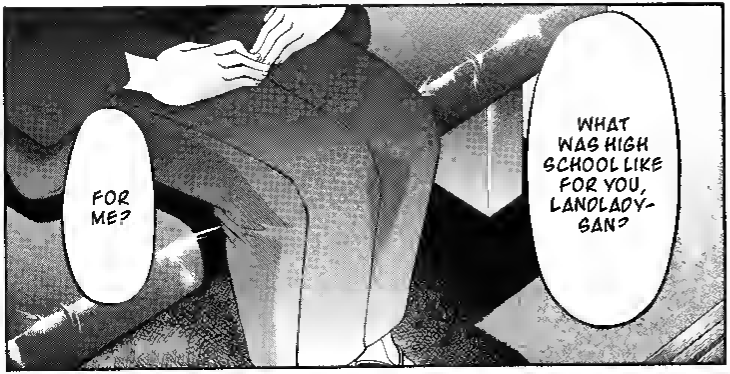
YES

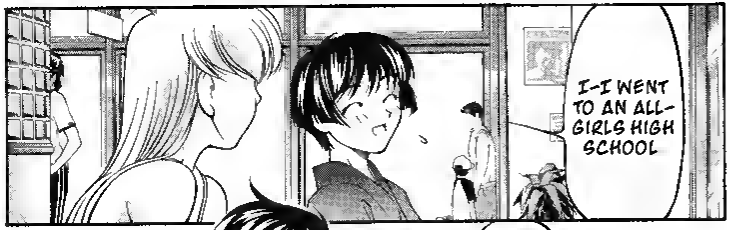
DON'T YOU WORRY!! AT THIS RATE, YOU'LL GET IT IN NO TIME!!

N-NO, NOT YET...
CHIZURU-SAN, ARE YOU ABLE TO SWIM 25 METERS YET?

SHE'S TEACHING US TO BE LIKE HER
TINA-ONEE-CHAN'S AN AWESOME SWIMMER!!

WELL, THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU'RE HAVING FUN.
BUT WE'VE BEEN LAUGHING SO MUCH, OUR STOMACHS WILL BE SORE FOR MONTHS.


WHAT WAS HIGH SCHOOL LIKE FOR YOU, LANDLADY-SAN?
FOR ME?

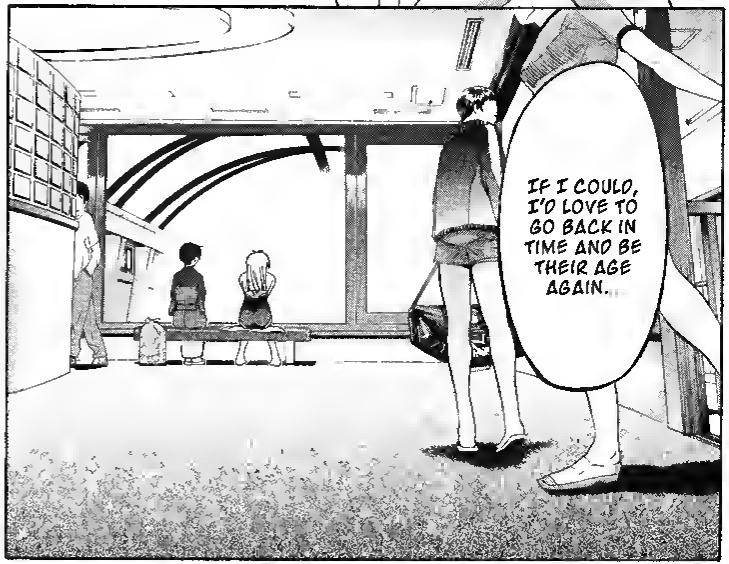

I-I WENT TO AN ALL-GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

SWEET! DID YOU WEAR ONE OF THOSE CUTE SAILOR SUITS TO CLASS?

Okay
DON'T PUSH YOUR-SELVES TOO HARD!

YUP HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS HAVE GOT IT ALL
THEY'RE SO FULL OF ENERGY

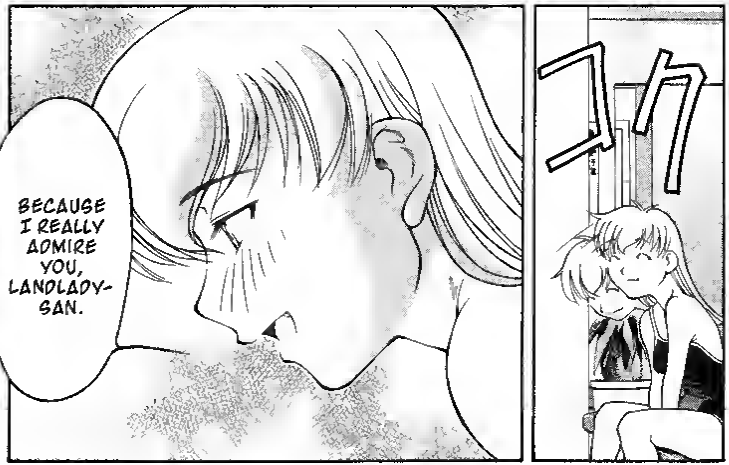
THANK YOU FOR LUNCH, AOI-CHAN!
TINA-ONEECHAN, CHIKA AND FRIENDS ARE GOING TO HEAD BACK INTO THE POOL


IF I COULD, I'D LOVE TO GO BACK IN TIME AND BE THEIR AGE AGAIN.

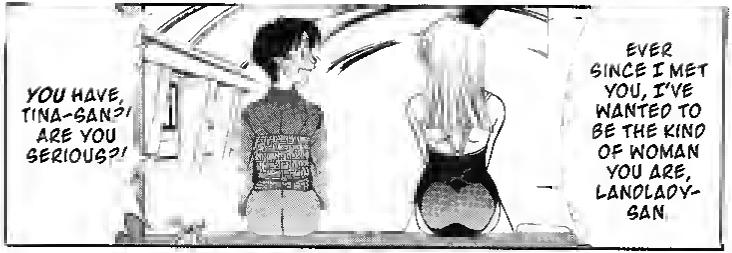
NO, THE UNIFORM WAS A HAKAMA.
HAKAMA?! THAT'S PRETTY COOL, TOO.
I TOOK A PRETTY HEAVY COURSE LOAD, SO THE DAYS SEEMED TO PASS VERY QUICKLY.
HMM

I WONDER IF I WOULD HAVE TURNED OUT AS GOOD AS YOU DID IF I HAD GONE TO THE SAME SCHOOL, LANDLADY-SAN

EH?! LIKE ME...BUT WHY?


BECAUSE I REALLY ADMIRE YOU, LANDLADY-SAN.
コク

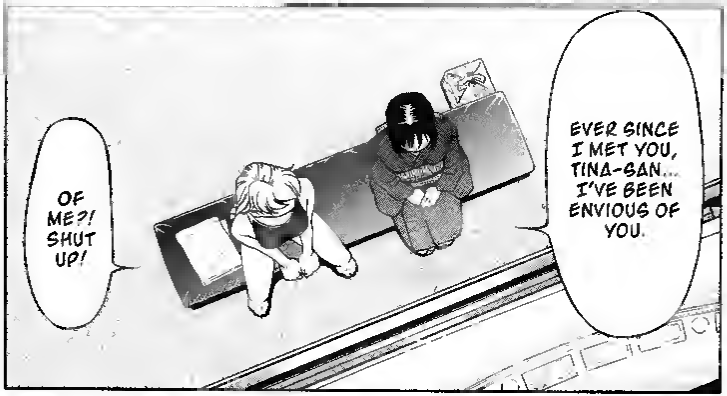
YOU'RE SUPER NICE, AND YOU CAN DO ANYTHING. YOU'RE LIKE THE QUEEN OF ALL WOMEN.

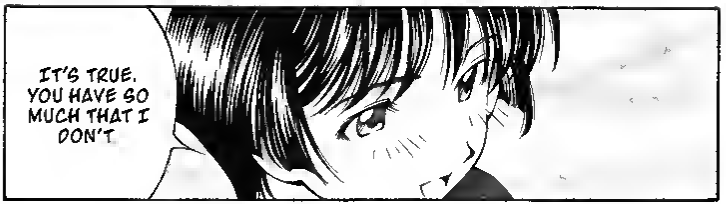

YOU HAVE, TINA-SAN?! ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
EVER SINCE I MET YOU, I'VE WANTED TO BE THE KIND OF WOMAN YOU ARE, LANDLADY-SAN.

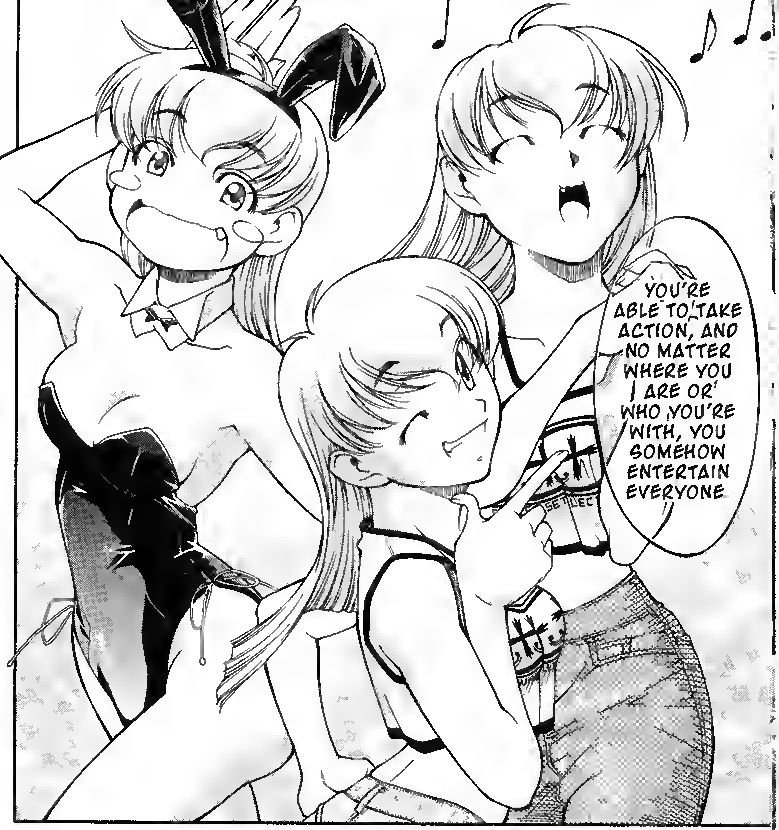
N-NO, YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF, BECAUSE WHEN I COMPARE MYSELF TO YOU, TINA-SAN

I'm just an owl unfortunately.
EVEN IF I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ACT LIKE YOU DO, I'VE ALWAYS FELT LIKE I COULD

..I...


OF ME?! SHUT UP!
EVER SINCE I MET YOU, TINA-SAN... I'VE BEEN ENVIOUS OF YOU.

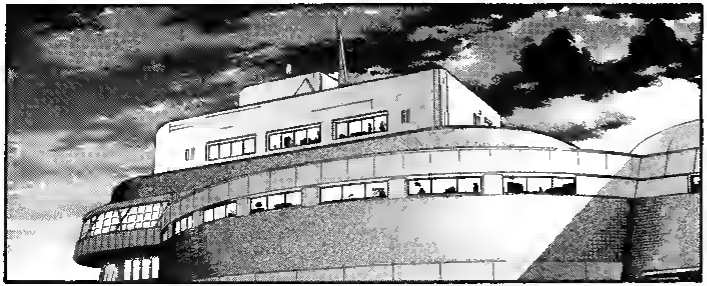

IT'S TRUE. YOU HAVE SO MUCH THAT I DON'T


YOU'RE ABLE TO TAKE ACTION, AND NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE OR WHO YOU'RE WITH, YOU SOMEHOW ENTERTAIN EVERYONE

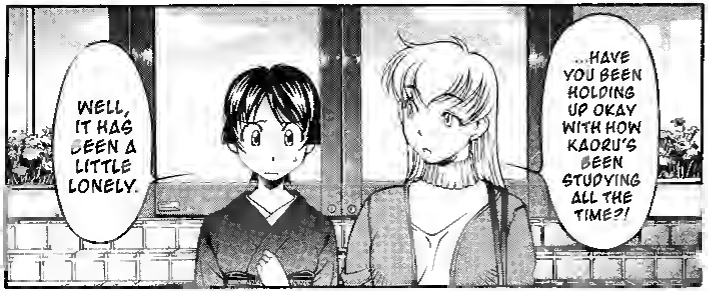
PFF ..

EVERY DAY I WISH THAT YOU COULD GIVE SOME OF THOSE QUALITIES TO ME, EVEN JUST A LITTLE

AH HA HA HA!
HOW FUNNY THAT WE BOTH THINK THAT WAY ABOUT EACH OTHER, LANDLADY-SAN!
YEAH, I NEVER WOULD HAVE GUESSED IT APPEARS THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER.

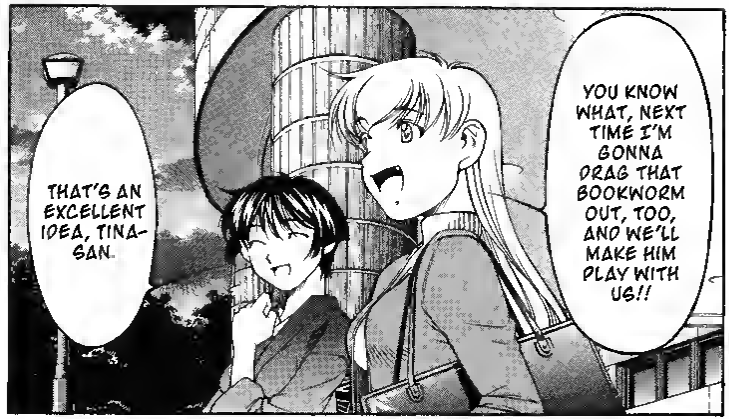


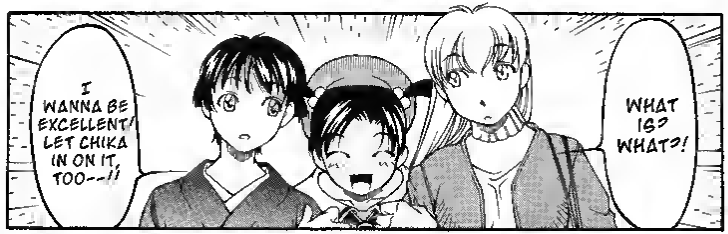
BY THE WAY, I WAS GOING TO ASK..

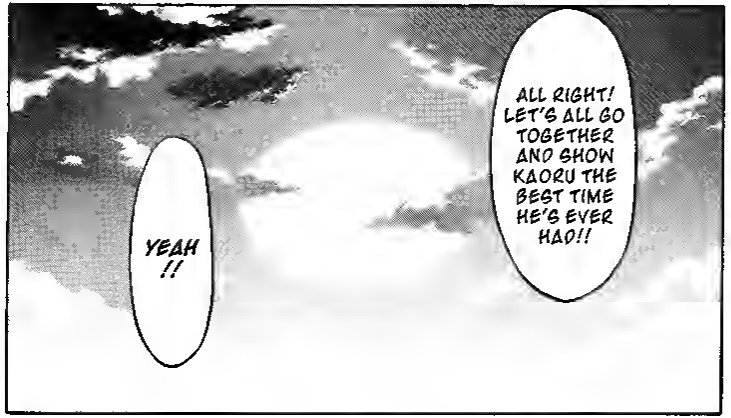

WELL, IT HAS BEEN A LITTLE LONELY.
...HAVE YOU BEEN HOLDING UP OKAY WITH HOW KAORU'S BEEN STUDYING ALL THE TIME?!

WHAT THE--?! THEY'RE LAUGHING ABOUT SOME-THING.
WOW. THEY'RE LIKE BEST FRIENDS, AREN'T THEY?
YUP!

AOI-ONEECHAN AND TINA-ONEECHAN ARE MY TWO FAVORITE WOMEN IN THE WHOLE WORLD!! ALONG WITH YOU GUYS AND MY COUSIN AND MIYAB!







End of Chapter 98: Tomogara — Comrades

Go for it CHIZURU!
Swim A full
25M
GO FOR IT! YOU CAN DO IT, CHIZURU!!
GO FOR IT! GO FOR IT! CHIZURU!!
I-I'M SORRY. I HAVE TO GO TO THE BATH-ROOM--!!
ガラ
MAYBE YOU'RE PUSHING HER TOO HARD? EASE UP A BIT.
MY, SHE SURE IS NERVOUS, ISN'T SHE...?

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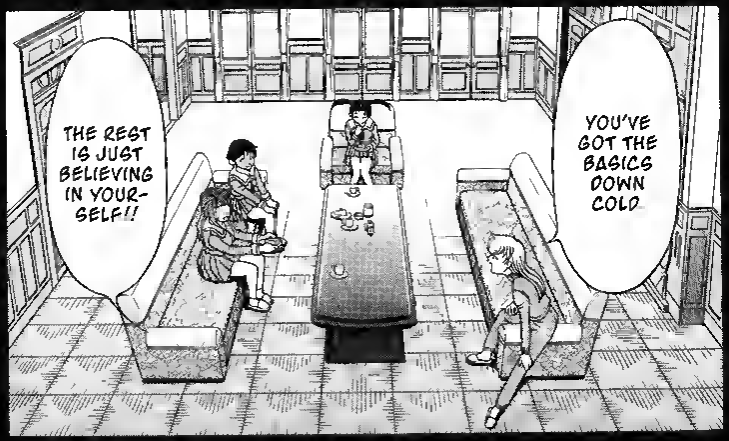
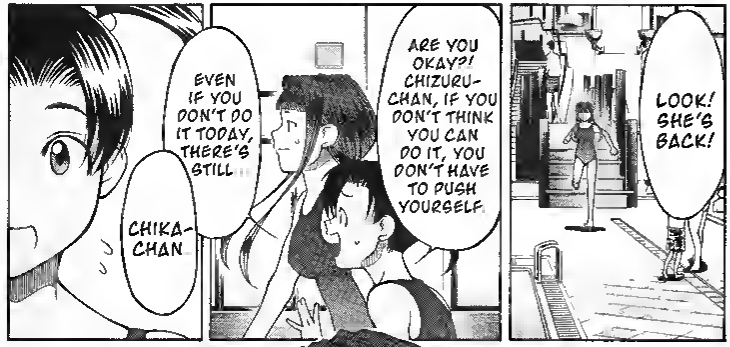
YOU CAN DO IT!!

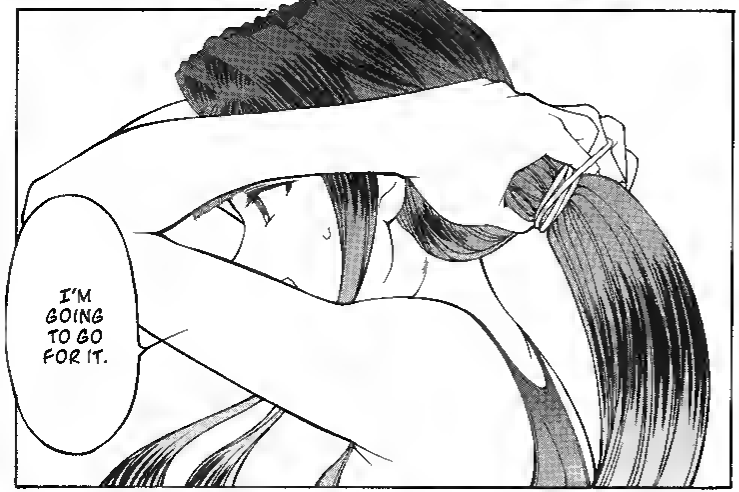

THE REST IS JUST BELIEVING IN YOURSELF!!
YOU'VE GOT THE BASICS DOWN COLD

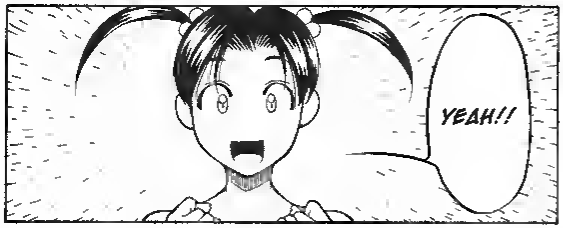
DON'T WORRY, WE'LL BE THERE TO CHEER YOU ON
B-B-BUT ...
MEEE?!

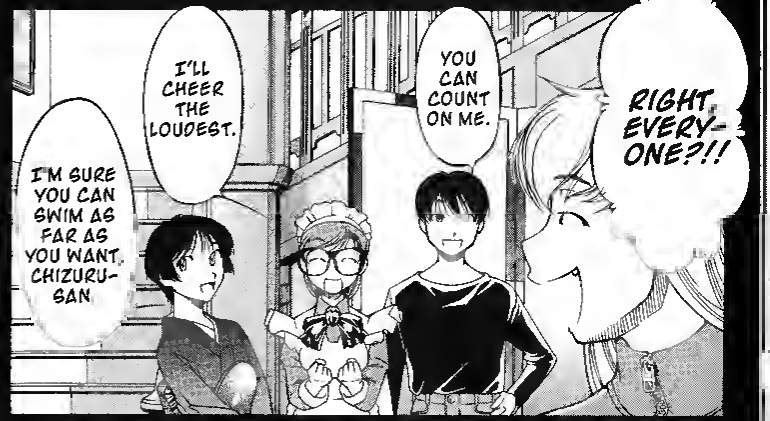
WHAT WILL I DO..? I'M HAVING A PANIC ATTACK!

CAN I DO IT? CAN SOMEONE LIKE ME REALLY SWIM 25 METERS?!


CHIKA-CHAN
EVEN IF YOU DON'T DO IT TODAY, THERE'S STILL
ARE YOU OKAY?! CHIZURU-CHAN, IF YOU DON'T THINK YOU CAN DO IT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUSH YOURSELF
LOOK! SHE'S BACK!

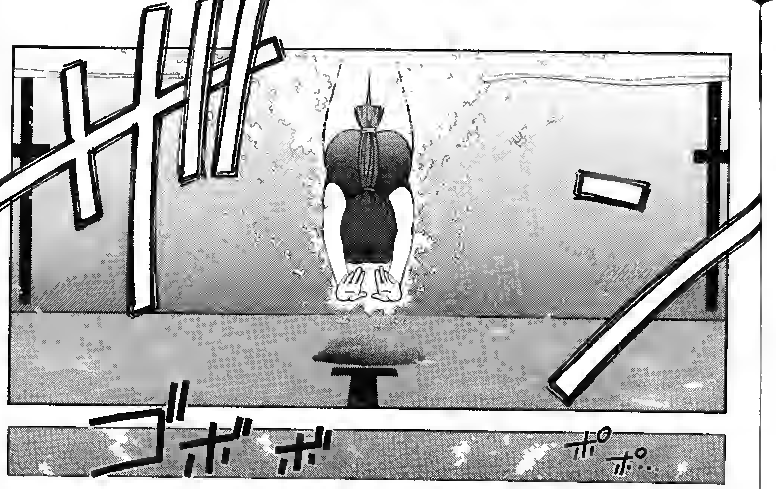

I'M GOING TO GO FOR IT.


YEAH!!


I'M SURE YOU CAN SWIM AS FAR AS YOU WANT, CHIZURU-SAN.
I'LL CHEER THE LOUDEST.
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.
RIGHT, EVERY-ONE?!!

BE CONFI-DENT!!
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF MORE

BELIEVE IN MYSELF ...?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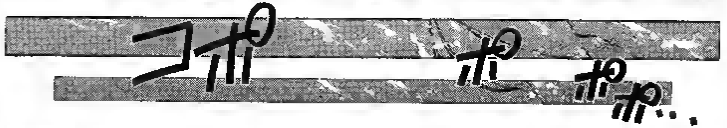
ボ…

I'M CHIKA MINAZUKI. NICE TO MEET YOU!!
キョロ
キョロ

GO FOR IT--!!
GO, CHIZURU! GO!!

GASP
PANT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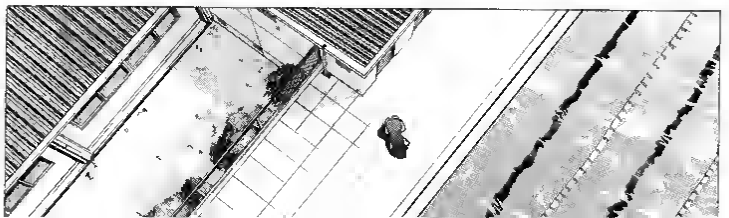
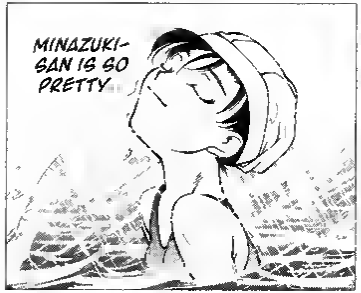


CHARMED, I'M SURE!!
I'LL INTRODUCE YOU. THIS IS NATSUKI KOMIYA.


MINAZUKI-SAN IS SO PRETTY.

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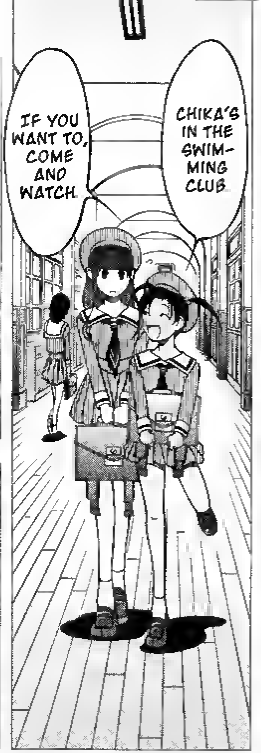
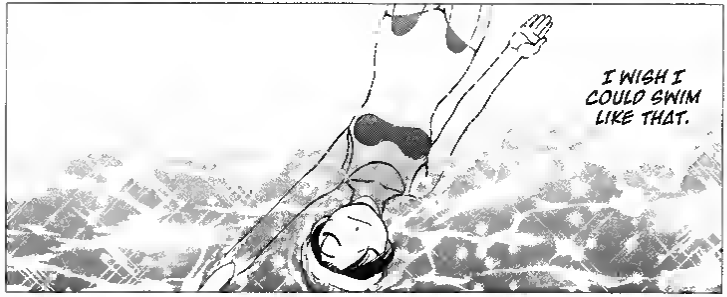

CHIKA'S IN THE SWIMMING CLUB.
IF YOU WANT TO, COME AND WATCH.


I WISH I COULD SWIM LIKE THAT.

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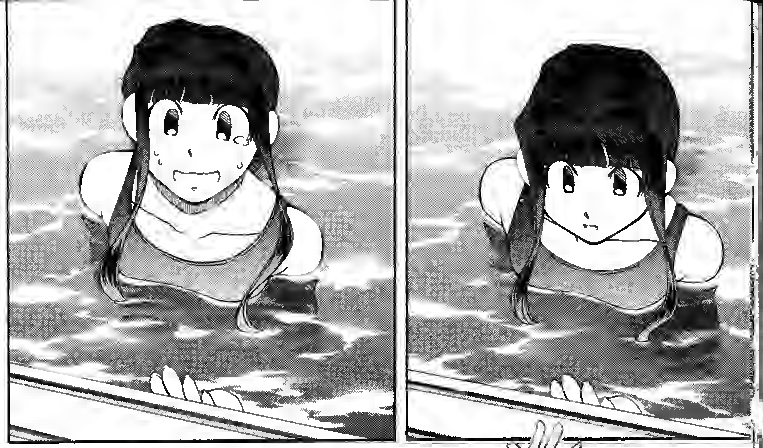
……
OH, COME ON, DON'T CRY. THIS IS NOTHING.
TH-THANK YOU...
うっ ひく…

YOU WEREN'T KIDDING, THEN? WHY DID YOU JOIN THE SWIMMING CLUB IF YOU CAN'T SWIM?
GEH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
HACK
COUGH
I-I'M SORRY...
HERE. THIS SHOULD MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER.
DON'T WORRY. I'LL STAY WITH YOU UNTIL YOU CALM DOWN.
YOU'VE SWALLOWED A LOT OF WATER.

YOU'VE GOT IT!
CHIZURU!!
GASP

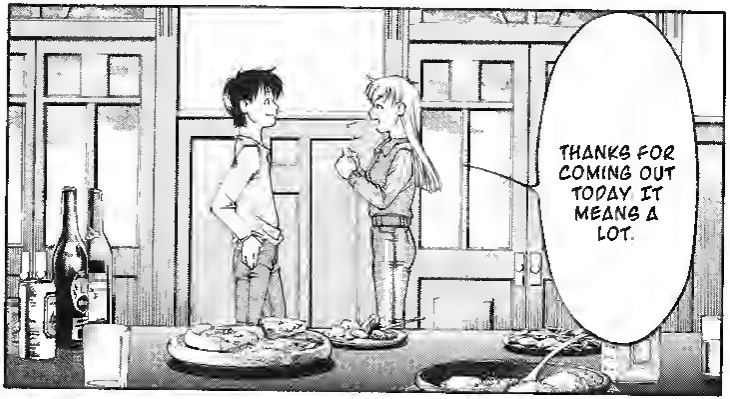
I HAVE TO DO IT! NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HURTS!!
Swim A FULL 25M
CHIKA-CHAN, AND NATSUKI-CHAN, AND TINA-SAN, AND EVERYONE EVERYONE .
THEY ALL BELIEVE IN ME. AND I BELIEVE IN THEM.
ポーン
ポーン...

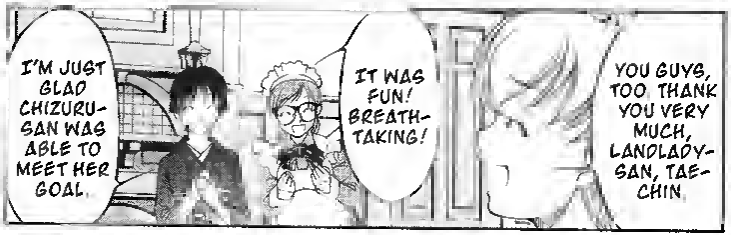
ピッポ～ン!!
CHIZU-RUUU!!
YOU DID IT!! YEEE-EEE !!



CHEERS!
LET'S ALL TOAST TO CHIZURUTCHI'S EFFORT AND THE GUTS THAT CARRIED HER THE FULL 25 METERS

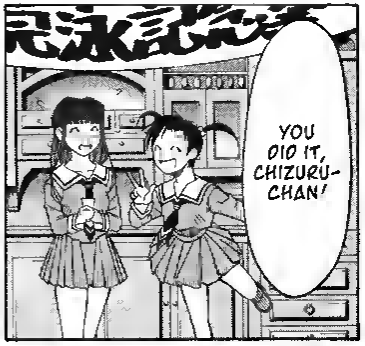
Congratulations CHI
In Commemora
Swimming 25M
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

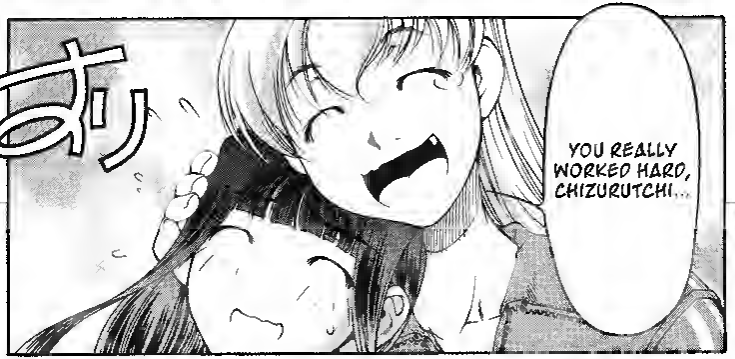

THANKS FOR COMING OUT TODAY IT MEANS A LOT.


I'M JUST GLAD CHIZURU-SAN WAS ABLE TO MEET HER GOAL.
IT WAS FUN! BREATH-TAKING!
YOU GUYS, TOO. THANK YOU VERY MUCH, LANDLADY-SAN, TAE-CHIN.

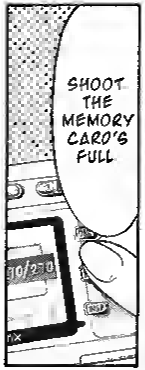
TODAY WAS ANOTHER UNFORGET-TABLE DAY...

YOU CAN DO ANYTHING WHEN YOU TRY, CHIZURU...


YOU DID IT, CHIZURU-CHAN!


おり
YOU REALLY WORKED HARD, CHIZURUTCHI...

KAORU
YEAH ?!


SHOOT. THE MEMORY CARD'S FULL

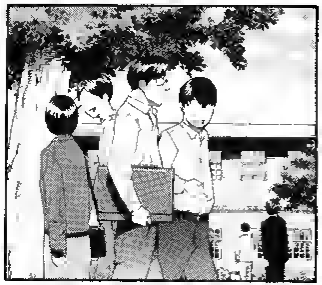
SAY "CHEEGE"
HEY, KAORU, TAKE MORE PICTURES!

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI

EVERY-ONE CHEERING HER ON
CHIZU-RUTCHI PUSHING HERSELF
SWIM-MING, THE FOUR OF US
AND THIS TIME, RIGHT NOW
...THESE ARE MOMENTS THAT I WILL TREASURE FOREVER

End of Chapter 99: Suigyo — Fish and Water



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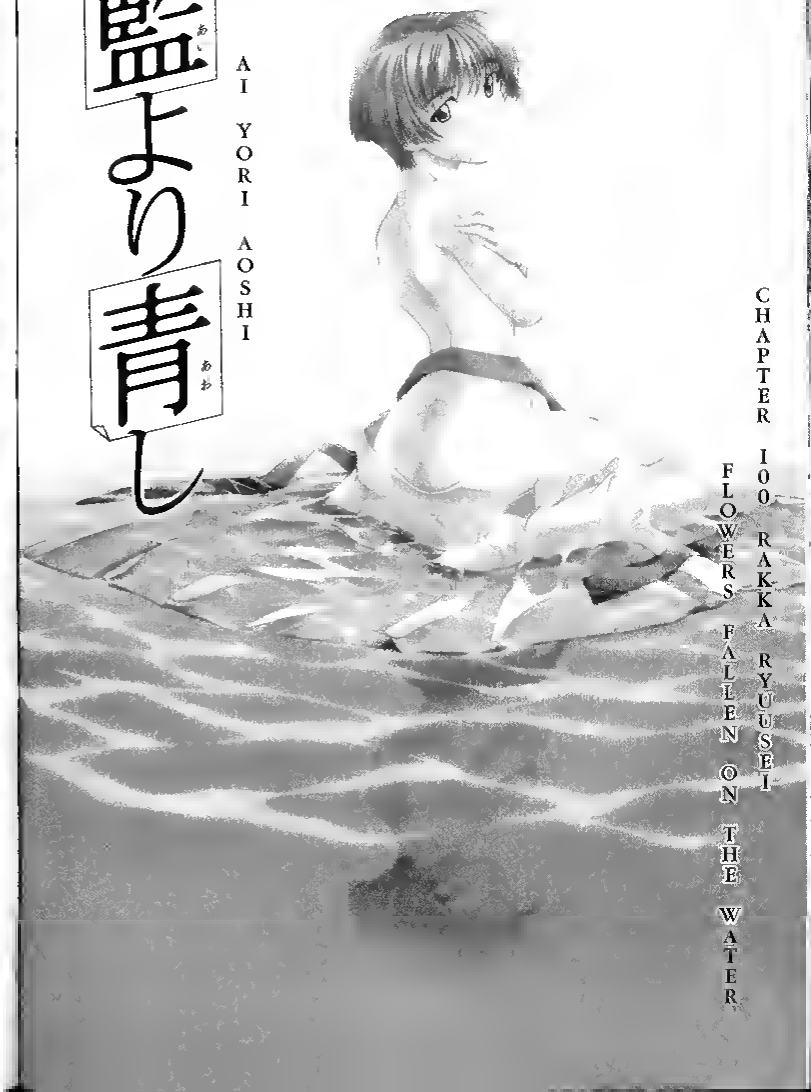
AI YORI AOSHI

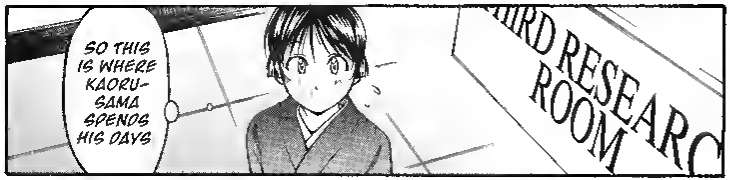


CHAPTER 100 RAKKA RYUUSEI

FLOWERS FALLEN ON THE WATER

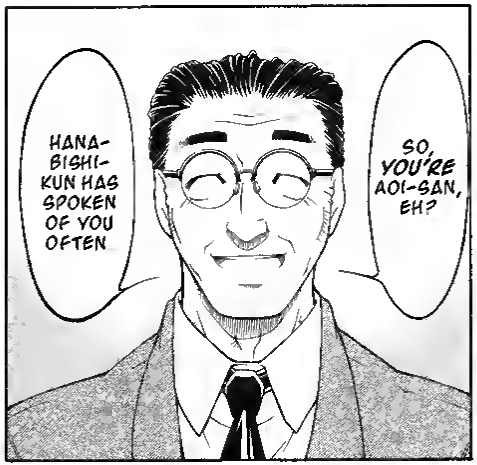
KAORU-SAMA DOESN'T USUALLY FORGET THINGS

HE MUST BE EXHAUST-ED.
.. FROM STUDYING SO LATE EVERY NIGHT.

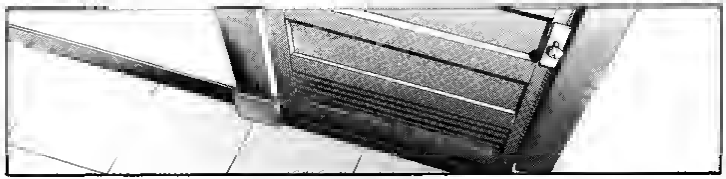

SO THIS IS WHERE KAORU-SAMA SPENDS HIS DAYS
ROOM

EX-CUSE ME...
COME IN...

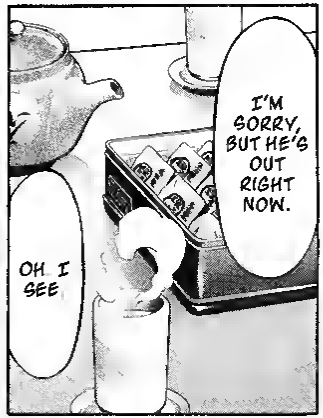
MIGHT KAORU HANABISHI-SAMA BE HERE?
I AM AOI SAKURABA


HANA-BISHI-KUN HAS SPOKEN OF YOU OFTEN
SO, YOU'RE AOI-SAN, EH?

UH, UM...
HO HO...



HEH... NO, I SEE, I SEE.


I'M SORRY, BUT HE'S OUT RIGHT NOW.
OH, I SEE.

IT'S ALL MAKES SENSE NOW
IT'S BECAUSE HE HAS A WOMAN AS WONDERFUL AS YOU
THAT HANASHI-KUN CAN WORK AS HARD AS HE DOES

THEN AGAIN--- AND FORGIVE ME IF I'M GETTING TOO PERSON-AL--
--BUT I WORRY THAT SOME-TIMES HE'S WORKING A LITTLE TOO HARD.

KEEP AN EYE ON HIM, WILL YOU? I KNOW YOU'RE ALREADY A ROCK OF SUPPORT, BUT...

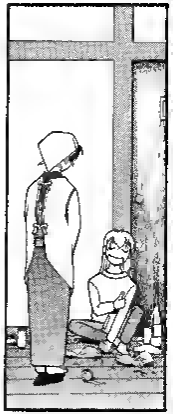
WORKING TOO HARD..?

I HAVE TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF KAORU-SAMA!!

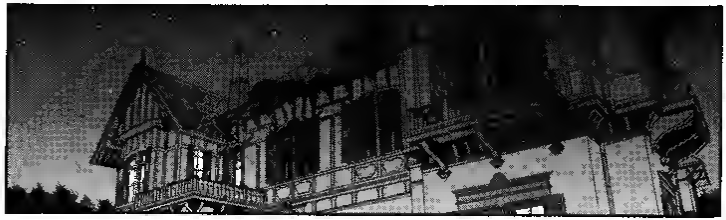
It's perfect for dinner
AOI-SAN, IT'S DONE! TAEKO'S SPECIAL CHOCOLATE-FONDUE SPAGHETTI!

All right!
I'LL START BY MAKING HIM MEALS THAT WILL BOOST HIS ENERGY.

I HAVE TO FOLD THE LAUNDRY.



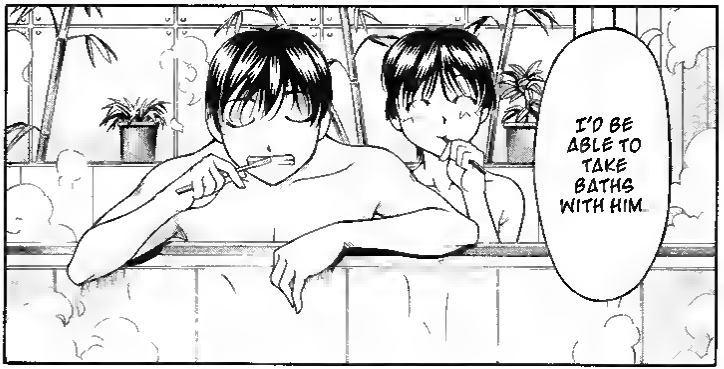
CLEAN, CLEAN!!

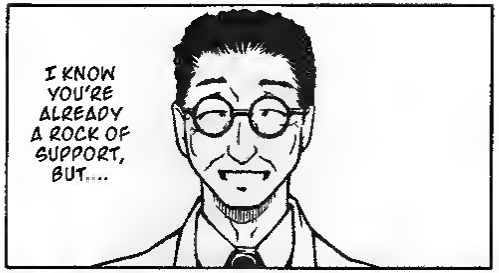


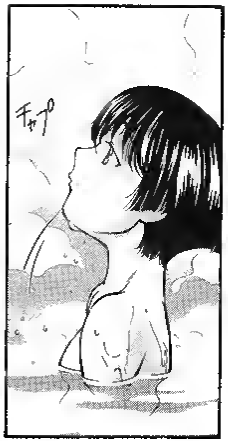
HAA...

EVEN IF I TRY AS HARD AS I CAN, I CAN ONLY KEEP UP WITH THE TASKS I'VE ALREADY BEEN DOING...

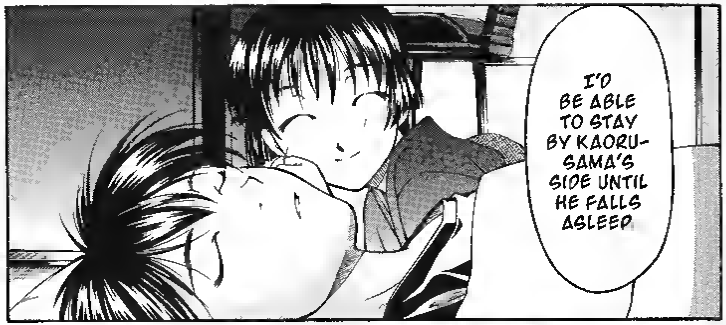
チャプ
IF...
IF KAORU-SAMA AND I LIVED ALONE...
...ALL THE THINGS I DO WOULD JUST BE FOR HIM.
...AND IT'S ALREADY CLEAR THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH IF I'M GOING TO TAKE CARE OF KAORU-SAMA PROPERLY


I'D BE ABLE TO TAKE BATHS WITH HIM.


I KNOW YOU'RE ALREADY A ROCK OF SUPPORT, BUT....



ISN'T THERE ANYTHING MORE..
...I CAN DO FOR MY KAORU?


I'D BE ABLE TO STAY BY KAORU-SAMA'S SIDE UNTIL HE FALLS ASLEEP

AND THEN...
AND THEN, KAORU-SAMA AND I..

UH, UM...
AOI-CHAN? WHAT'S WRONG?
KAORU-SAMA...

HUH?!
IS THERE ANYTHING MORE I CAN DO FOR YOU?
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO BE OF MORE SERVICE TO YOU, KAORU-SAMA?

AOI-CHAN, YOU DO A TON OF WORK TAKING CARE OF ME
I COULDN'T ASK FOR ANY-THING MORE...
NO, WELL, YOU COOK DELICIOUS MEALS.
...AND YOU WORK YOUR FINGERS TO THE BONE CLEANING
I'M DOING MY BEST, BUT FOR YOU, KAORU-SAMA...
...I WANT TO BE ABLE TO DO SO MUCH MORE THAN I HAVE BEEN.
WHAT CAN I DO..?
WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED, KAORU-SAMA? IT CAN BE ANYTHING.

I'LL STILL DO ALL THE SAME THINGS THAT I HAVE BEEN...
...BUT I WANT TO PUT EVEN MORE OF MYSELF INTO CARING FOR YOU, KAORU-SAMA.
I LOOK AT ALL YOUR HARD WORK AND I TRY AND TRY TO MATCH YOUR EFFORTS...
...BUT I FEEL SO TRAGIC FOR FAILING.

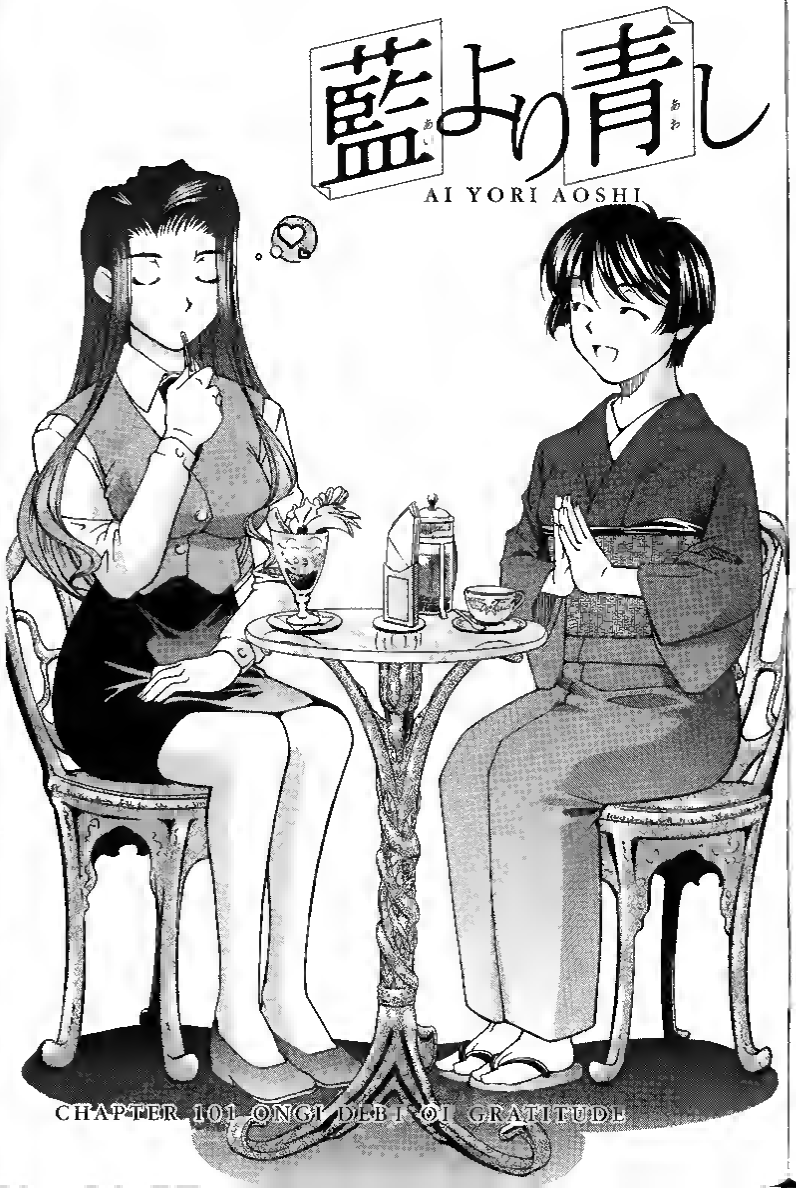
YOU'VE GOT IT COMPLETELY WRONG, AOI-CHAN.

I'M ONLY ABLE TO WORK HARD BECAUSE YOU TAKE SUCH GOOD CARE OF ME.

TO HAVE YOU BY MY SIDE, THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY, MORE THAN ANY THING.

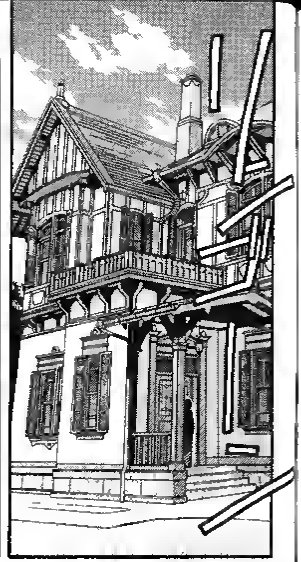
AND BEING ABLE TO TOUCH YOU, MY BELOVED AOI-CHAN, AND FEEL YOU SO NEAR...

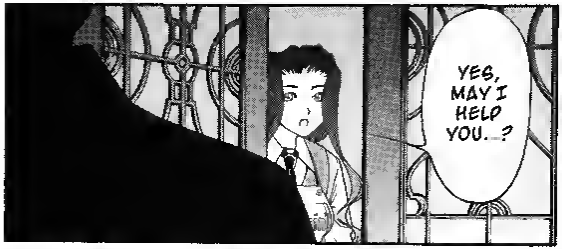
KAORU-SAMA...



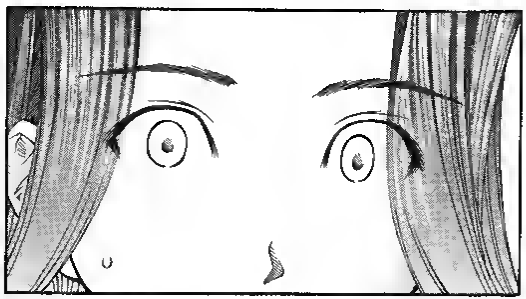
End of Chapter 100: Rakka Ryuusui — Flowers Fallen on the Water

DON'T WORRY, AOI-SAMA, I'LL GET IT
COM-ING--!

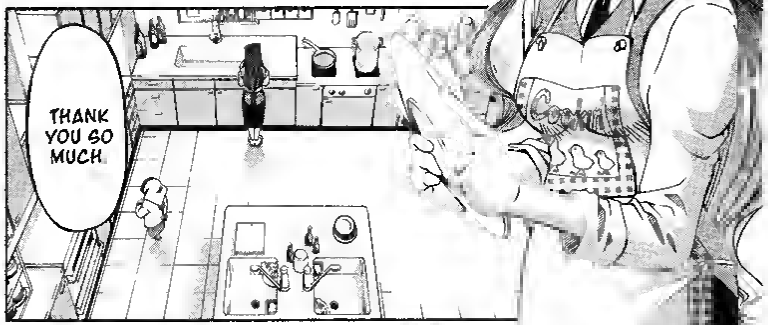



YES, MAY I HELP YOU...?

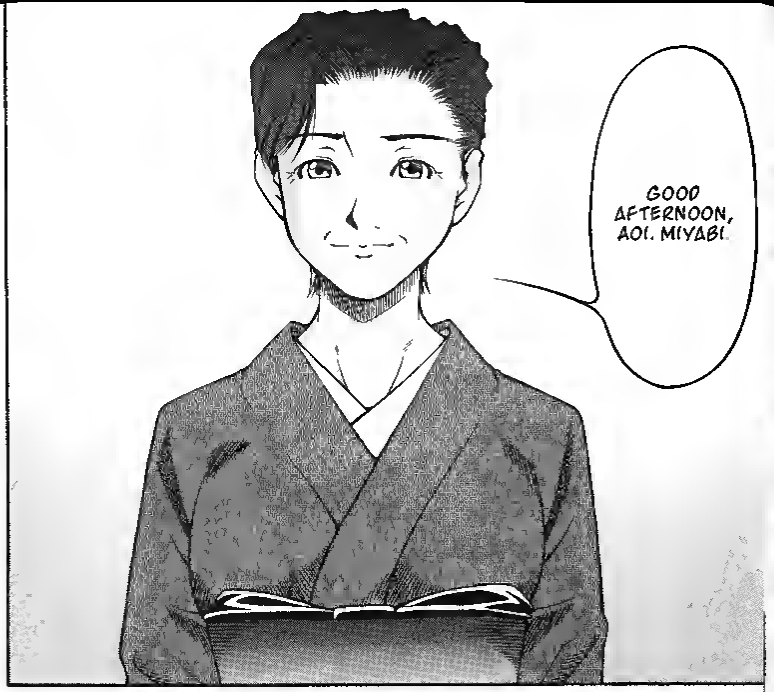
IS SOME-THING WRONG? MIYABI-SA--



I'VE FINISHED WASHING THE DISHES, AOI-SAMA.

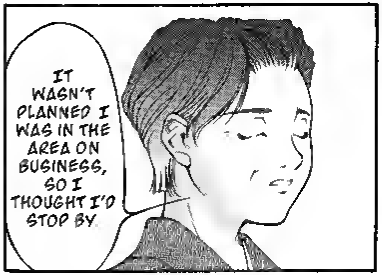

THANK YOU SO MUCH.

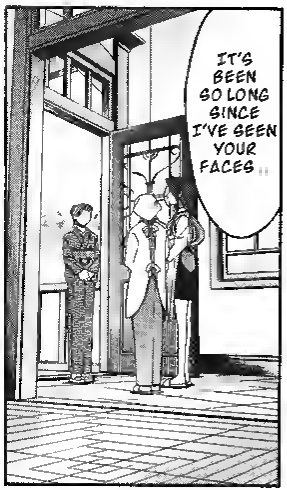
YOU CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON MIYABI-SAN.


GOOD AFTERNOON, AOI. MIYABI.

MOTHER, IF YOU HAD LET US KNOW YOU WERE COMING, WE WOULD'VE PICKED YOU UP

OKU-SA-MA!!
MO-THER!!
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU BOTH.

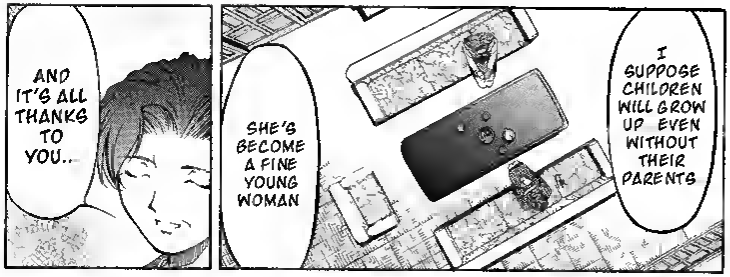

IT WASN'T PLANNED I WAS IN THE AREA ON BUSINESS, SO I THOUGHT I'D STOP BY.


IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE SEEN YOUR FACES.

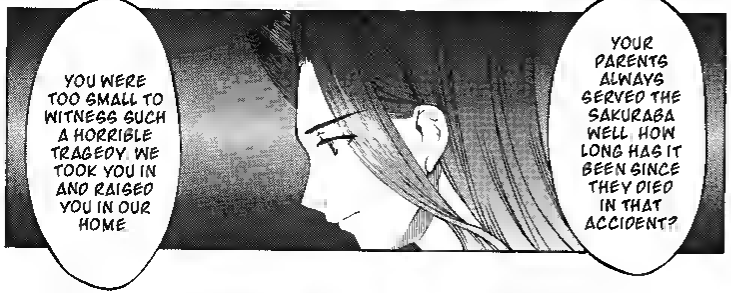
MOTHER, WILL YOU STAY AND HAVE DINNER WITH US?

I WANT TO SHOW YOU WHAT AN EXCEL-LENT COOK I'VE BE-COME

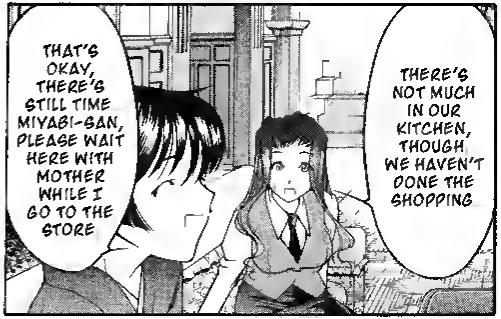
KAORU-SAMA AND THE OTHERS WILL BE HOME IN JUST A LITTLE WHILE


I SUPPOSE CHILDREN WILL GROW UP EVEN WITHOUT THEIR PARENTS
SHE'S BECOME A FINE YOUNG WOMAN
AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU..

...MIYABI.
THANK YOU. YOU'RE TOO KIND


YOUR PARENTS ALWAYS SERVED THE SAKURABA WELL. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE THEY DIED IN THAT ACCIDENT?
YOU WERE TOO SMALL TO WITNESS SUCH A HORRIBLE TRAGEDY. WE TOOK YOU IN AND RAISED YOU IN OUR HOME

I DON'T MIND!! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK
HANG ON A SEC-OND

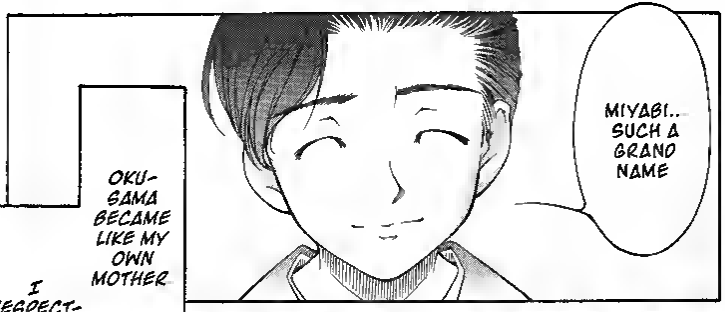

THERE'S NOT MUCH IN OUR KITCHEN, THOUGH WE HAVEN'T DONE THE SHOPPING
THAT'S OKAY, THERE'S STILL TIME MIYABI-SAN, PLEASE WAIT HERE WITH MOTHER WHILE I GO TO THE STORE

AH...
TAP
TAP
TAP

IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE I'VE SEEN AOI IN SUCH HIGH SPIRITS.

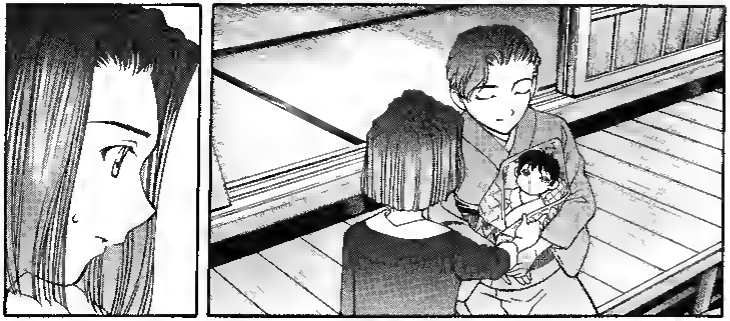
I'M PLEASED TO MEET YOU. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

MI... MIYABI.
MIYABI KAGURA-ZAKI


MIYABI.. SUCH A GRAND NAME
OKU-SAMA BECAME LIKE MY OWN MOTHER
I RESPECT-ED AND ADMIRED HER.

HERE, COME MEET MY DAUGH-TER.
HER NAME..

NOT LONG AFTER I ENTERED THE HOUSE-HOLD, OKU-SAMA HAD A BABY



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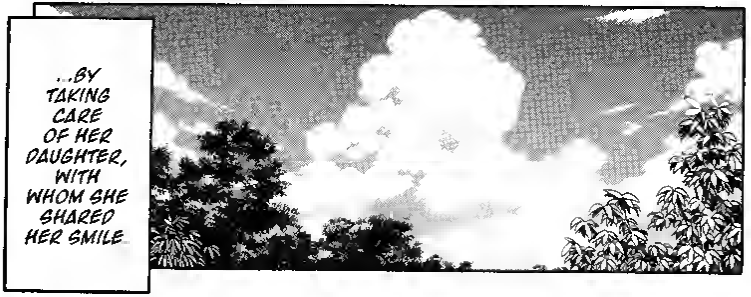
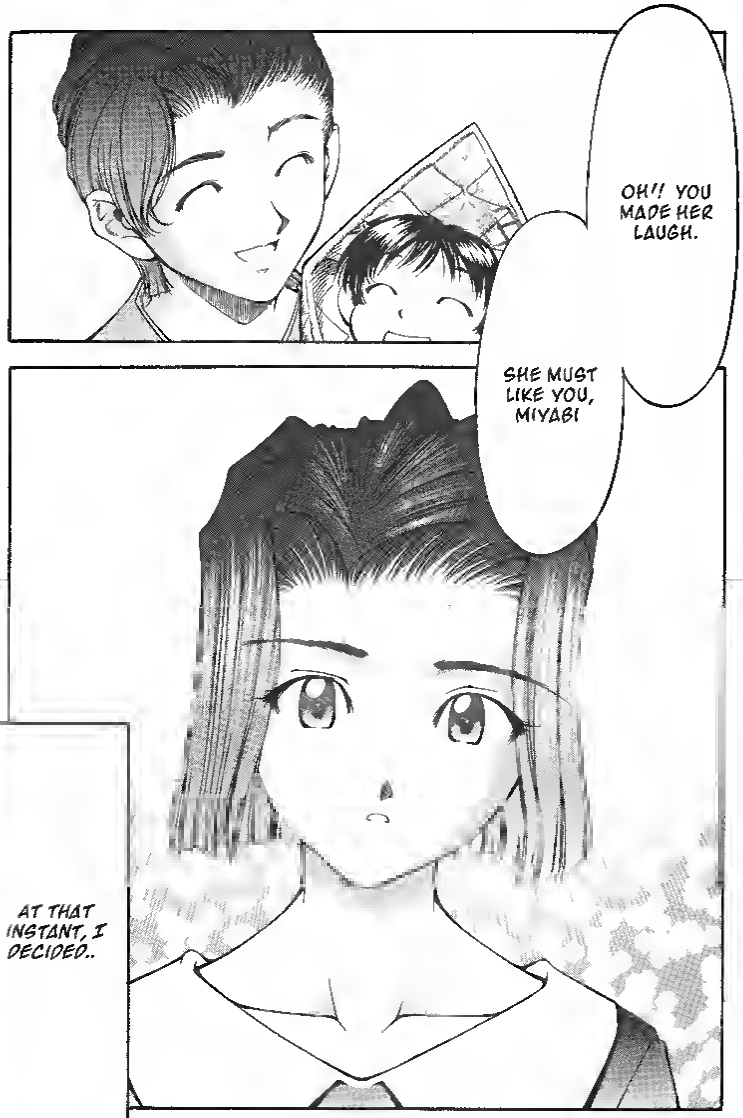
KYA
HA
HA
...

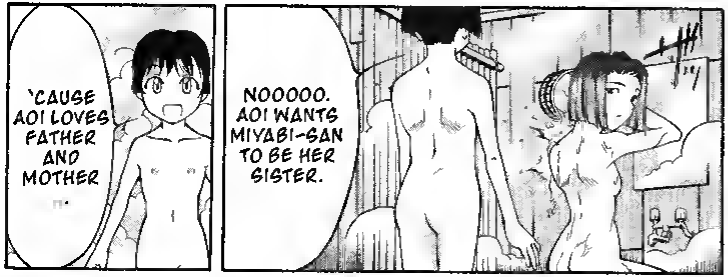
...IS
AOI.

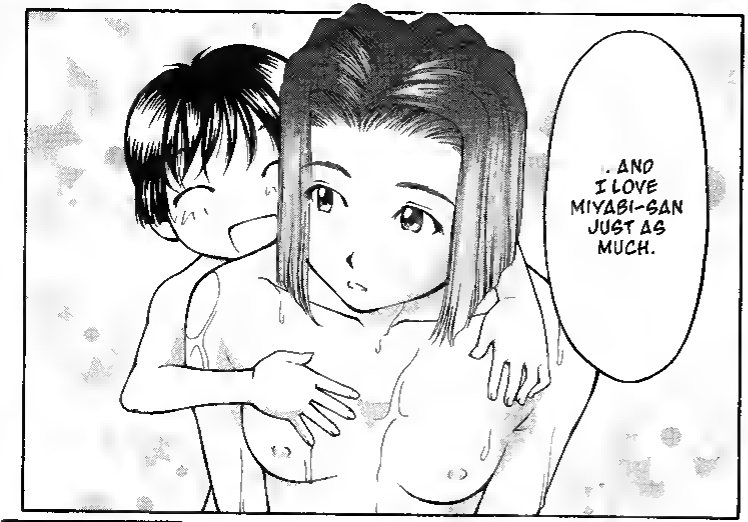
AOI...

...I WOULD DEVOTE MYSELF TO HER
I WANTED TO RETURN THE DEBT OF GRATITUDE FOR OKU-SAMA TAKING CARE OF ME...

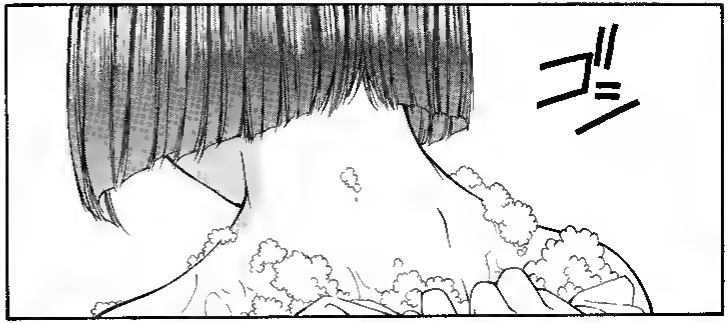

...BY TAKING CARE OF HER DAUGHTER, WITH WHOM SHE SHARED HER SMILE.


OH!! YOU MADE HER LAUGH.
SHE MUST LIKE YOU, MIYABI
AT THAT INSTANT, I DECIDED..


'CAUSE AOI LOVES FATHER AND MOTHER
NOOOOO. AOI WANTS MIYABI-SAN TO BE HER SISTER.


. AND I LOVE MIYABI-SAN JUST AS MUCH.

EVEN BETTER THAN A SENSE OF A PROMISE FULFILLED WAS THE JOY OF BEING LOVED BY SOMEONE AS MUCH AS AOI-SAMA LOVED ME.
AOI-SAMA!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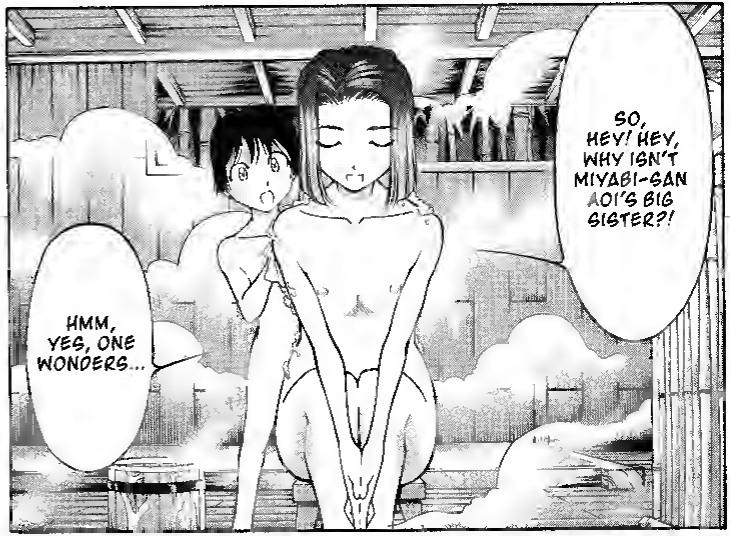
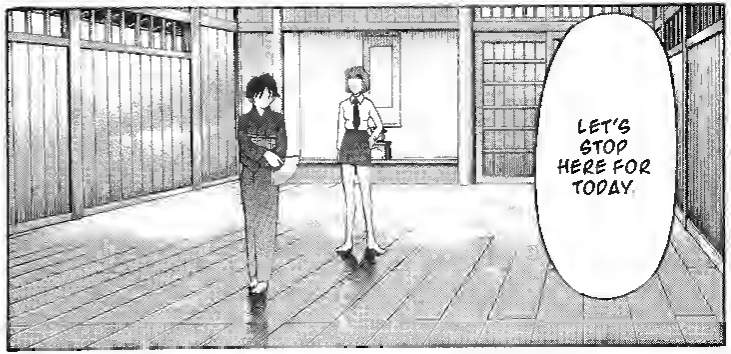
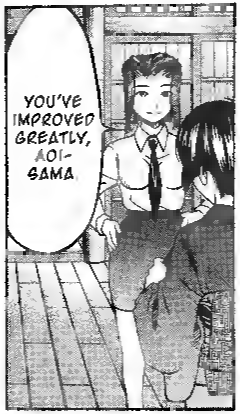

SO, HEY! HEY, WHY ISN'T MIYABI-SAN AOI'S BIG SISTER?!
HMM, YES, ONE WONDERS...

. BUT WHY DOES IT MATTER? SOMEDAY, YOU MIGHT HAVE A YOUNGER BROTHER OR SISTER ALL YOUR OWN, AOI-SAMA

HERE, AOI-SAMA, CATCH!
A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?! AOI-SAMA!
Hahaha

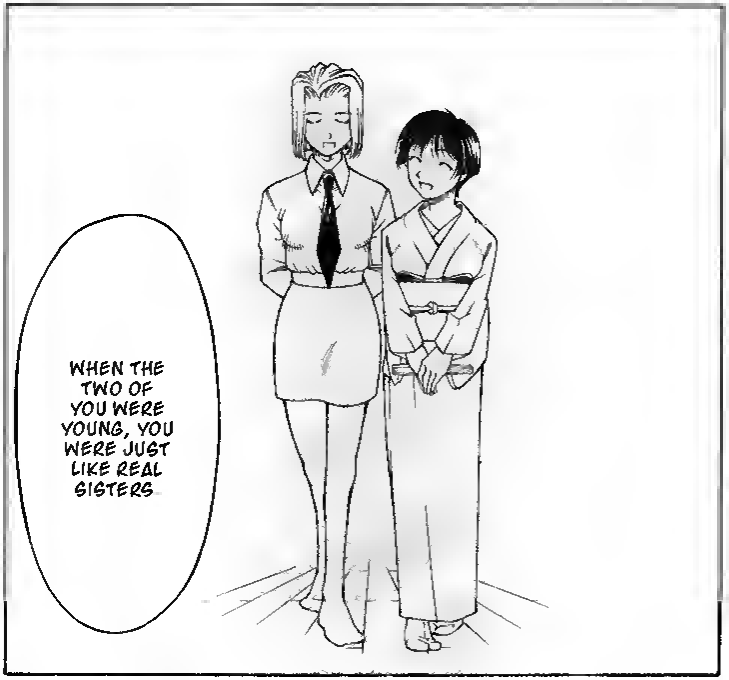
NOT LIKE THAT!!
HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU?
IF YOU CAN'T HOLD CHOPSTICKS PROPERLY, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO EAT WITH OTHER PEOPLE.
I-I'M SORRY, MIYABI-SAN...


LET'S STOP HERE FOR TODAY.


YOU'VE IMPROVED GREATLY, AOI-SAMA.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

MIYABI-SAN, I'LL TRY HARDER AND ONLY GET BETTER


WHEN THE TWO OF YOU WERE YOUNG, YOU WERE JUST LIKE REAL SISTERS.

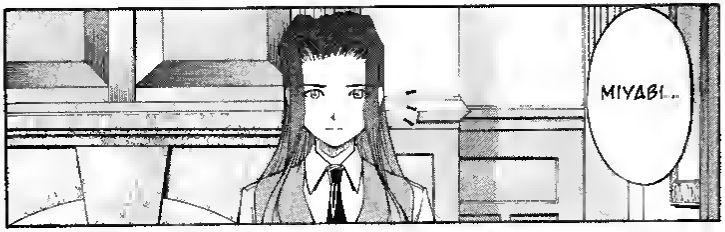
THERE IS NO APPRECIA-TION NE-CESSARY. IT'S AN HONOR.

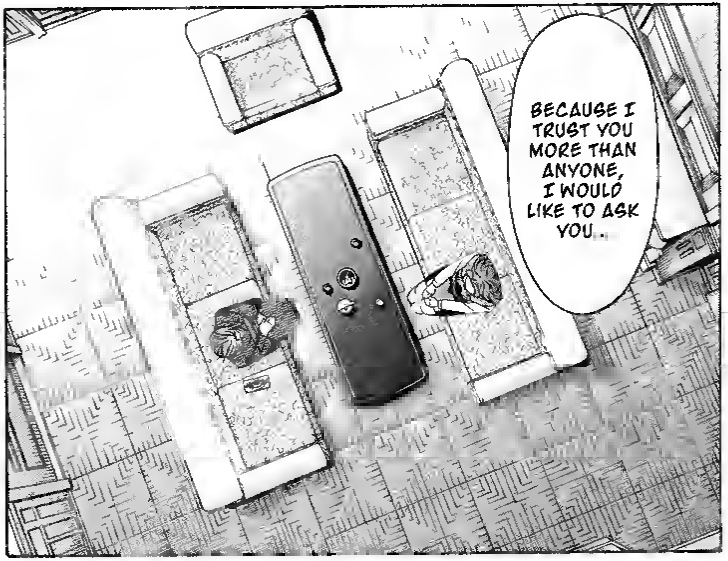
I CAN NEVER EXPRESS HOW MUCH I APPRECIATE YOUR BEING SO KIND AND WATCHING OVER AOI.

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI

CHAPTER 102 RENSHI NOBLE SISTERS





End of Chapter 101: Ongi — Debt of Gratitude

MIYABI, I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR IT STRAIGHT FROM YOUR MOUTH.
TELL ME ABOUT KAORU HANABISHI.

KAORU-DONO? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

AS FAR AS I CAN TELL...

WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD OF KAORU-SAN ACCEPTING HIS ROLE AS THE HEAD OF THE HANABISHI FAMILY?

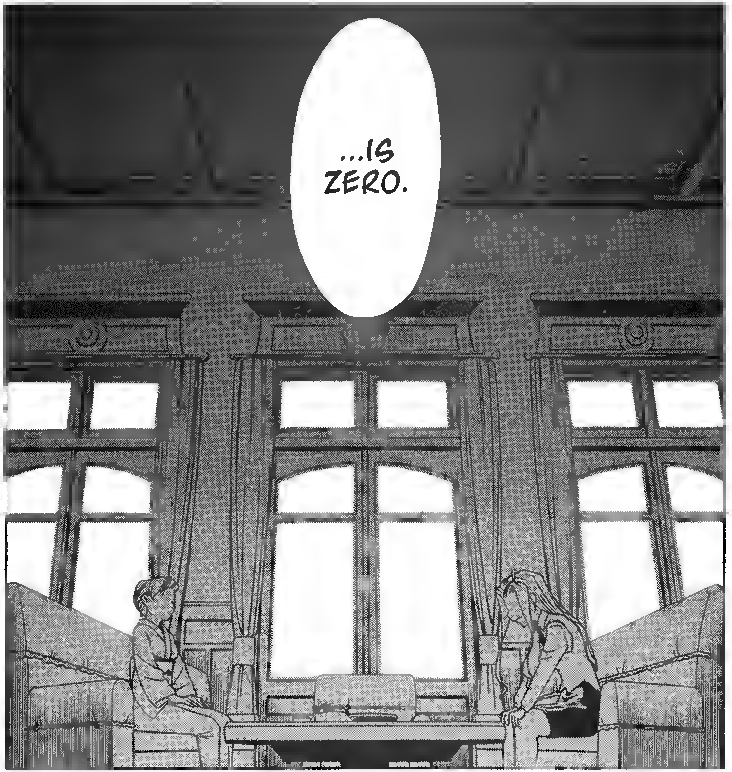
. THE LIKELI-HOOD..

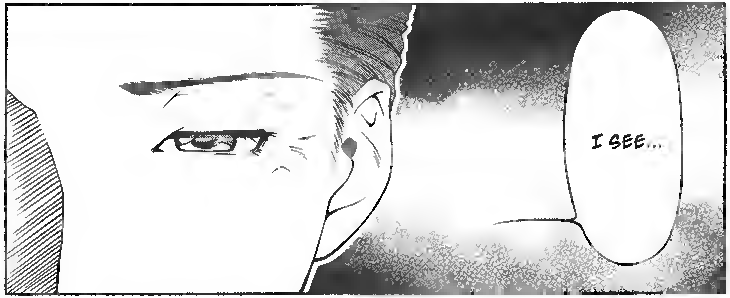
I CAN SAY WITHOUT RESERVATION THAT KAORU-DONO IS THE PERSON MOST SUITABLE FOR AOI-SAMA.

BUT...

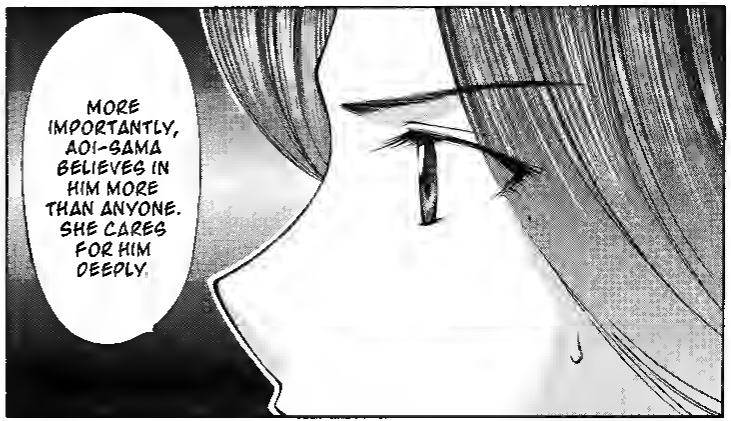
HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FULLY ACCEPT AOI-SAMA'S KIND, LOVING HEART.

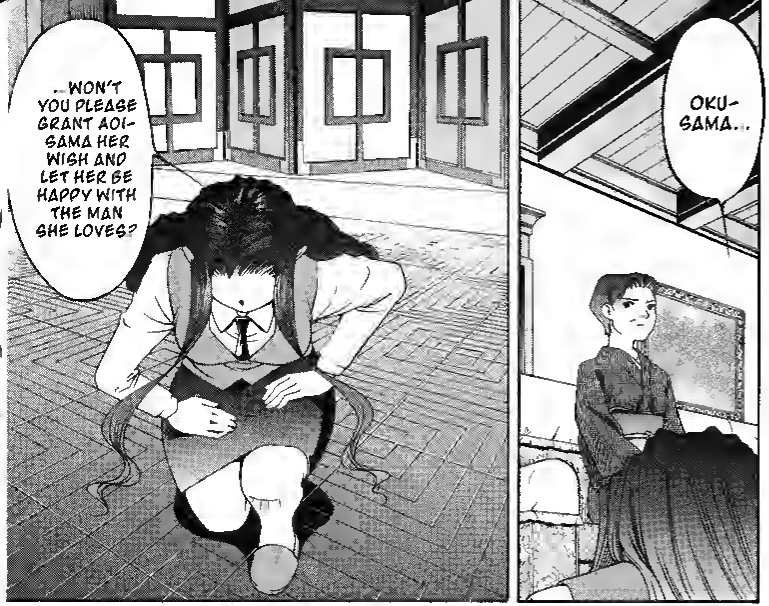
IT'S TRUE HE MAY SEEM LIKE AN AWKWARD YOUNG MAN NOW...


...IS ZERO.


I SEE...

...BUT I BELIEVE THAT HE WILL SURELY BRING GOOD FORTUNE TO THE SAKURABA.


MORE IMPORTANTLY, AOI-SAMA BELIEVES IN HIM MORE THAN ANYONE. SHE CARES FOR HIM DEEPLY.


OKU-SAMA...
...WON'T YOU PLEASE GRANT AOI-SAMA HER WISH AND LET HER BE HAPPY WITH THE MAN SHE LOVES?

IT MAY BE AOI'S WISH ...
. BUT IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO GET THE SAKURABA TO ACCEPT KAORU-SAN IF HE DOESN'T HOLD THE POWER OF THE HANABISHI.

STILL, THERE CAN BE NO GREATER ENDORSEMENT THAN THAT OF MY DAUGHTERS

I WILL PUT THE SAME FAITH IN KAORU-SAN AS YOU HAVE.

WELCOME HOME, AOI-SAMA.
WHAT--? WHERE'S MOTHER?

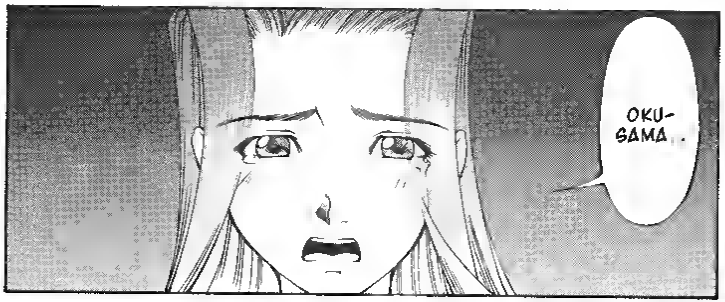
I'M BACK!

SHE HAD MORE BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF, SO...
REALLY?! SHE ALREADY LEFT?

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU WORKED UP QUITE A SWEAT.

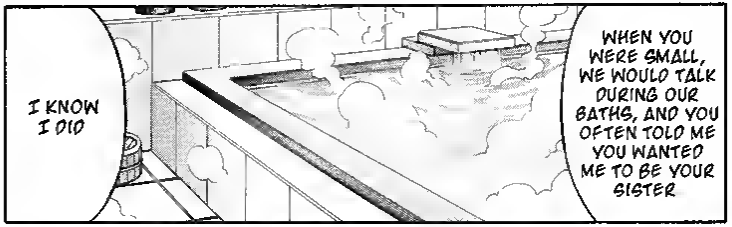
I'M SO SAD! I THOUGHT WE'D BE ABLE TO HAVE DINNER TOGETHER JUST LIKE OLD TIMES.
sigh

WHAT DO YOU THINK, AOI-SAMA..


OKU-SAMA..

THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

I ALSO REMEMBER HOW SAD YOU LOOKED WHEN I TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAD TO START TAKING BATHS BY YOURSELF
PLEASE, TELL ME YOU'RE JOKING, MIYABI-SAN .?
WOW. YOU HAVE A GOOD MEMORY, MIYABI-SAN.
NATU-RALLY


I KNOW I DID
WHEN YOU WERE SMALL, WE WOULD TALK DURING OUR BATHS, AND YOU OFTEN TOLD ME YOU WANTED ME TO BE YOUR SISTER

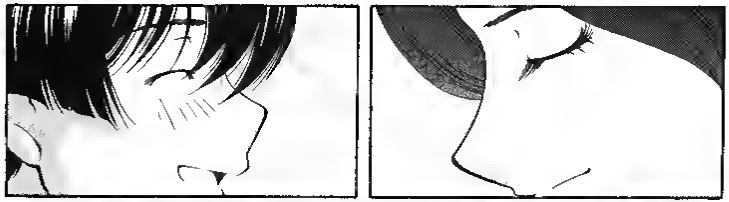
THERE WERE TIMES BACK THEN WHEN YOU WERE VERY STRICT, MIYABI-SAN...

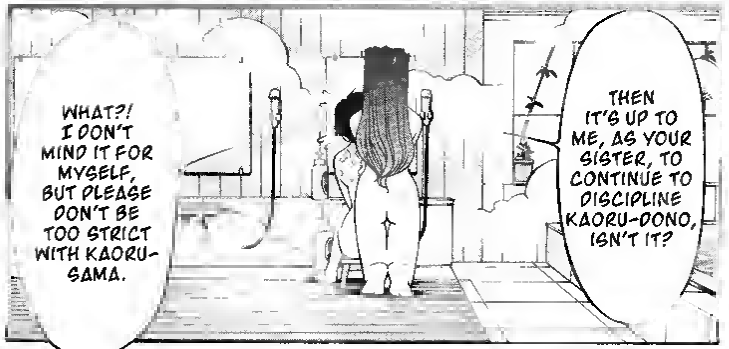
ゆ
JUST LIKE OLD TIMES?
...WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A BATH TOGETHER?

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE WE SHARED A BATH, HASN'T IT?

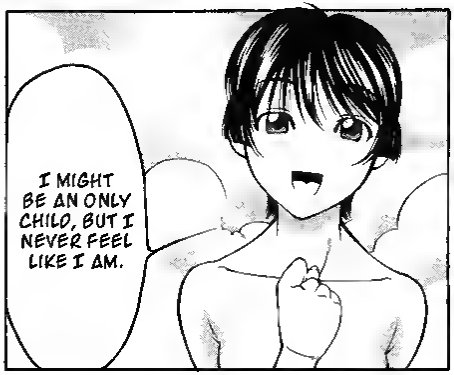
WHEN YOU WERE TWELVE, AOI-SAMA.
I WONDER WHEN THE LAST TIME WAS...

IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU, MIYABI-SAN. YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I HAVE A BIG SISTER!



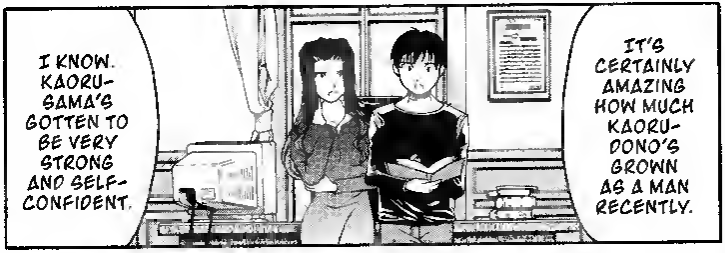

WHAT?! I DON'T MIND IT FOR MYSELF, BUT PLEASE DON'T BE TOO STRICT WITH KAORU-SAMA.
THEN IT'S UP TO ME, AS YOUR SISTER, TO CONTINUE TO DISCIPLINE KAORU-DONO, ISN'T IT?

..BUT WHEN WE WERE IN THE BATH TOGETHER...
..YOU WERE ALWAYS GENTLE, AND YOU WASHED ME WITH CARE.


I MIGHT BE AN ONLY CHILD, BUT I NEVER FEEL LIKE I AM.

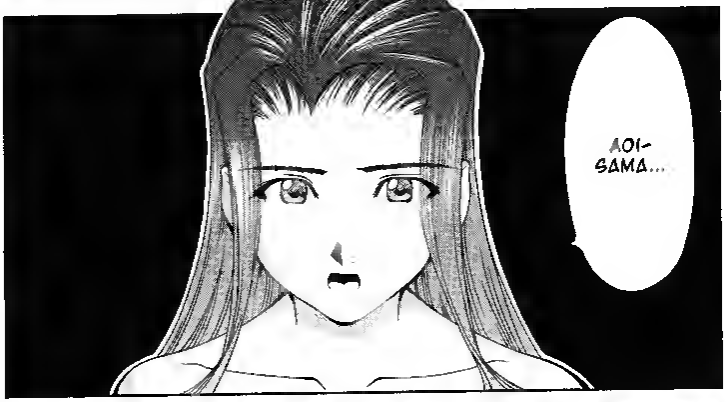
IT WAS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS.

BESIDES, I'M ALREADY JEALOUS THAT HE'S BEEN SPENDING MORE TIME WITH YOU THAN HE HAS WITH ME LATELY, MIYABI-SAN.

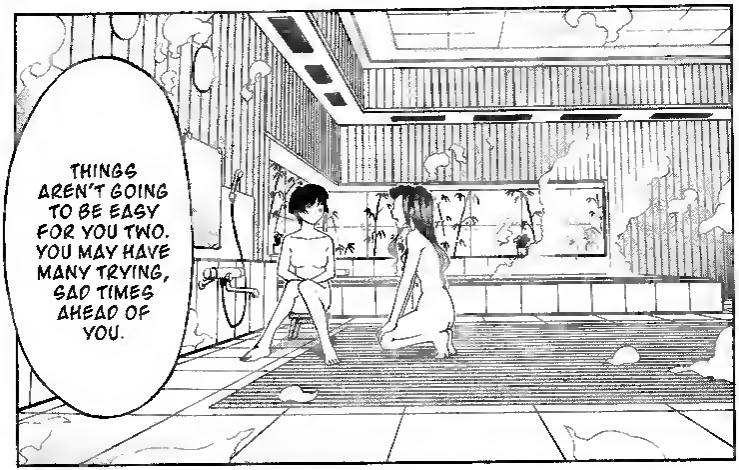

I KNOW. KAORU-SAMA'S GOTTEN TO BE VERY STRONG AND SELF-CONFIDENT.
IT'S CERTAINLY AMAZING HOW MUCH KAORU-DONO'S GROWN AS A MAN RECENTLY.

...BUT NOW I HAVE NO DOUBT EVERY-THING WILL BE ALL RIGHT.

WHEN I FIRST MET HIM, I DIDN'T SEE HOW I COULD POSSIBLY TRUST HIM WITH YOU, AOI-SAMA...


AOI-SAMA...

Y-YES?

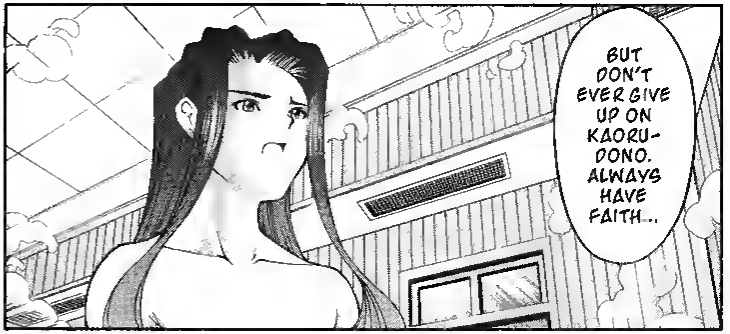

THINGS AREN'T GOING TO BE EASY FOR YOU TWO. YOU MAY HAVE MANY TRYING, SAD TIMES AHEAD OF YOU.

IT BELONGS TO YOU, AOI-SAMA, AND YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR YOURSELF.

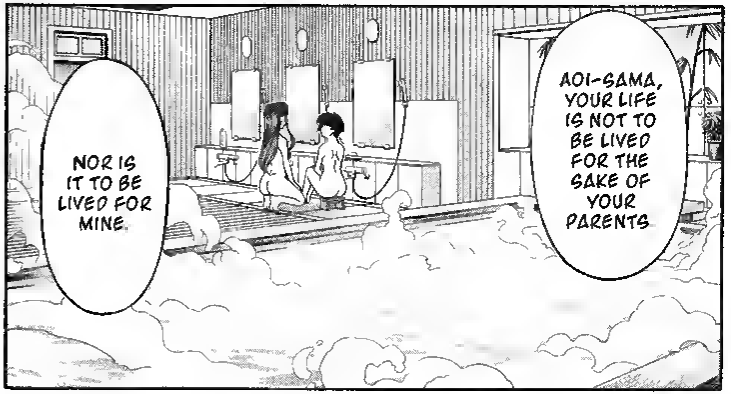
I'M SURE WHATEVER YOU DO..

I WILL!!
THANK YOU FOR UNDER-STANDING.

MIYABI-SAN...


BUT DON'T EVER GIVE UP ON KAORU-DONO. ALWAYS HAVE FAITH...

IN HIM. AND IN YOURSELF.


AOI-SAMA, YOUR LIFE IS NOT TO BE LIVED FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR PARENTS.
NOR IS IT TO BE LIVED FOR MINE.

End of Chapter 102: Renshi — Noble Sisters

ASSIST THANKS

HIDENORI IWANAGA
JUN SIOZAKI
TOMOHIRO HORIE
MIYUKI
YOSIHIRO SONO
YOSIMI NANJOU

EDITOR

SHOUICHI NAKAZAWA
(HAKUSENSHA)

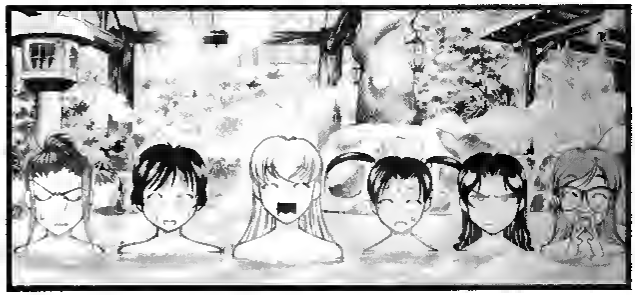
PRODUCE

KOU FUMIZUKI
(STUDIO LITTLE COTTON)

NEXT TIME IN

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI



Tina invites everyone to Kyushu to visit the hot springs there. Much to Kaoru's dismay men and women are allowed to bathe together so he must join his lady friends. When the group arrives at Hakata, Tina's home prefecture, she insists on getting some alone time with Kaoru, and then convinces him to act like her boyfriend!

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